A SPECIAL ISSUE

THE Nation.

THE NEW INEQUALITY

JUNE 30, 2008
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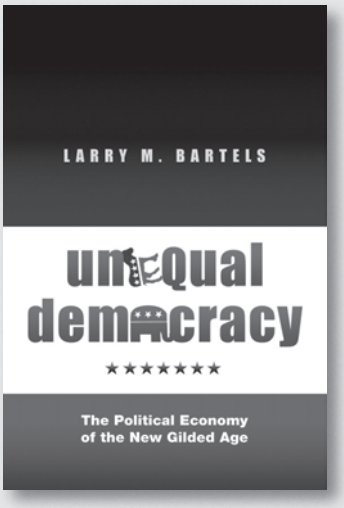

Unequal Democracy
The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age
Larry M. Bartels

"This is a fantastic book, a real tour de force. It is a hugely important study of increasing economic inequality in America and the failure of the political system to mitigate its effects on poor citizens. It is the best work that has been done on the political economy of income inequality."—**Thomas Mann**, Brookings Institution

"With intellectual force, *Unequal Democracy* pulls back the sheets on Washington's pamper-the-rich policy process and offers ideas about how we can do better by average citizens and the poor. It is Bartels at his very best, and his very best is the best there is."
—**John J. DiIulio, Jr.**, University of Pennsylvania, former director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

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Letters

The Gipper Killed It

Seattle
Harry First's June 2 "Bring Back Antitrust!" is welcome and refreshing. For years, as we have discussed issues of economic injustice and accelerating inequality, commentators have focused on tax policy, globalization, attacks on organized labor, minimum wage and immigration. These are important. But completely left out has been the destruction of antitrust law, which allowed fair competition and protected small businesses and consumers.

The death of antitrust occurred under Ronald Reagan. When we ended limits on vertical price controls, restraint of trade, predatory pricing and strict scrutiny of mergers, among other changes, we created a seismic shift in our economy. Large competitors can now limit small businesses' access to vendors and suppliers, drive up their operating costs and use predatory pricing to eliminate those pesky competitors who might actually gain a foothold. This has happened in industry after industry, including emerging technologies. Wal-Mart is a prime example, but it is hardly alone. Thanks for this piece—and bring us more.
Larry Shannon

Elephant on a Seesaw

Stockholm
The implosion of the Republican Party, astutely analyzed by Eyal Press in "Is the Party Over?" [June 2], offers us some hope for the change many wish the November election to bring. Two points. First, the Republican Party has increased the scope of government, not shrunk it. The expansion of the military-industrial complex and domestic security apparatus contradicts the original conceptions of conservatives, who were rightly suspicious of the state.

Second, many hold to the idea that the Republican demise is simply based on their failure to deliver competent administration and to shrink the welfare state. But corporate America has killed off jobs and attacked the standard of living. We need more solutions beyond the market and the state. Many liberals love the state and many conservatives love the market. The people alternate between the limits of both. When the limits of one become apparent, the other will return to power. Liberals need to get off this seesaw and embrace options beyond the market and the state.
Jonathan Michael Feldman

Instant Runoff Voting—It's Time!

Takoma Park, Md.
"Boxed In" [June 2] by Peter C. Baker criticizes Instant Runoff Voting. But IRV's record of success in practice and on the ballot (winning thirteen of its last fourteen ballot measures, including landslide wins in cities like Minneapolis, Oakland, Sarasota and Santa Fe), combined with its history of being upheld in our courts and implemented on our voting equipment, tells us we're on the right track.

We try to avoid sectarian debate among reformers because we think it props up the status quo. Cyberactivists' attacks on IRV can be mathematically seductive but psychologically weak, with little real-world significance (see how we address the monotonicity issue that concerns Baker at our new page, at fairvote.org/monotonicity).

IRV's flaws, if they existed, would have showed up in the decades of IRV elections in Australia and Ireland, in the growing number of US elections using IRV and in the dozens of IRV student government elections. They'd keep League of Women Voters state affiliates and charter commissions from recommending IRV. But they don't. In IRV elections more than two candidates can run, and no one is a spoiler.

Take Australia. In 2007, the Labor Party took power. Labor and the Liberal and National parties' alliance won 148 of 150 seats; but independents won two and the major parties had to compete in a way that is utterly foreign to Americans. No district had fewer than four candidates, with an average of seven from across the spectrum. Every winner gained more

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The Nation.
since 1865

Obama, McCain & Iraq

It's a tradition in American presidential politics that once the primaries are over, both the Democratic and Republican candidates move to the center in search of that all-important centrist swing voter. Let's hope that this year, at least, Barack Obama resists that impulse when it comes to what is likely to be one of the most contentious issues in this fall's campaign: Iraq.

EDITORIAL

In fact, we need to do more than hope. Progressives, antiwar activists and, yes, even swing voters—who long ago realized that Iraq is what Obama, in 2002, called a "dumb war"—should demand that the senator from Illinois draw as stark a contrast as possible between himself and John McCain over Iraq.

Within the Obama camp, according to insiders, there is a debate about whether and how to do exactly that. Some of the senator's advisers want him to soft-pedal differences with McCain, in the belief that they can take the antiwar vote for granted. Others argue that, on the contrary, doing so would be bad politics—since it would fail to mobilize the millions of voters who sent a resounding message to end the war in the 2006 election—*and* bad policy.

Two important recent events should stiffen Obama's spine on Iraq. The first is the stunning (albeit long-delayed) report from the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, chaired by Jay Rockefeller of West Virginia, a detailed study of speeches and statements from President Bush, Vice President Cheney and other Administration officials during the run-up to the war, in 2002–03. The report compared their statements with the underlying intelligence on a wide range of issues, from Iraq's nonexistent ties to Al Qaeda, to Saddam Hussein's nonexistent intention to give nonexistent weapons of mass destruction to terrorists, to various details about Iraq's nonexistent chemical and nuclear weapons. It's a damning indictment of the White House's flagrant fabrications to fuel the war.

It doesn't take a brilliant strategist to see that all Obama has to do is detail how McCain, too, greedily inflated the danger. Obama can compare McCain's hyperventilating over the Iraq threat before the war to the record Rockefeller's committee has laid out, then distinguish that from his own record—like his speech at a 2002 antiwar rally, in which he warned that war on Iraq would "fan the flames of the Middle East, and encourage the worst, rather than the best, impulses of the Arab world and strengthen the recruitment arm of Al Qaeda."

The second event is the visit to Washington by a delegation from the Iraqi Parliament—the same Parliament whose election McCain points to as a triumph of purple-fingered democracy. The Iraqi officials gave Congress a letter rejecting the proposed US-Iraq treaty authorizing an extended US occupation of Iraq. The Administration is not only pressuring the Iraqi government to agree to humiliating terms that infringe on its sovereignty; it says it will then push the agreement through without Senate approval. The letter, signed by a majority of Iraq's 275-member Assembly, says: "The majority of Iraqi representatives strongly reject any military-security, economic, commercial, agricultural, investment or political agreement with the United States that is not linked to clear mechanisms that obligate the occupying American military forces to fully withdraw from Iraq."

That's a document that Obama ought to be reading from this summer. It would express his clear opposition to the US-Iraq pact Bush wants and challenge McCain over his support for it. Even the Iraqis want us to leave, Obama should say. Then he should ask: So why are we still there, Senator McCain?

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NEWS & ANALYSIS

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Joseph E. Cooper: Fathers and sons

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NATION POLL

Hillary's next move

VIDEO NATION

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WEB LETTERS

Expresss yourself online

Empire or Republic?

War doesn't pay, nor does imperial ambition.

This proposition should be evident to anyone who has paid attention to the fivefold increase in the price of oil since George W. Bush took office. The principle of nonintervention is neither liberal nor conservative in orientation, and at the inception of the Republic it was accepted as a commonsense.

COMMENT

The dominant assumption of our nation's founders was to avoid "foreign entanglements," to use Thomas Jefferson's words of warning. Indeed, the policy of nonintervention was considered by the founders as a basic demarcation between the politics of the Old and New Worlds. Explaining in his farewell address why he, as our first President, followed "our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances, with any portion of the foreign world," George Washington cautioned his countrymen to "moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism."

What has happened to the American people that these modest yet profound sentiments seem so foreign to the tongues of our politicians and the ears of their constituents? Who among our top leaders, Democrat or Republican, dares warn against the "impostures of pretended patriotism"?

As Washington warned, it is extremely difficult to unmask "pretended patriotism" when the nation is frightened by enemies real and imagined. But Washington could not have anticipated the sort of mass media society in which government propaganda becomes compelling and inconvenient truths are concealed behind the veil of national security. He certainly did not anticipate the modern militarized state, in which a permanent war footing has been the norm since the onset of the cold war.

For these reasons, Washington's concerns needed the updating provided by our other great general turned President, Dwight David Eisenhower. Ike's farewell address provides a perfect bookend to Washington's, for it marks a modern President's recognition that the fears of our first President had been realized. The Empire had come to replace the Republic. The "military-industrial complex" that Eisenhower warned against was merely the logical extension of a stark policy of American intervention into the affairs of nations on every continent and the imperial reach of forward military bases throughout the world. What alarmed Eisenhower most was that the system that had grown up to counter communism (something he saw as a real threat) was self-perpetuating and disconnected from the defensive tasks at hand. Eisenhower predicted exactly what has come to pass. Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union, and with it the rationale for the cold war, the military-industrial complex soon found another enemy: terrorism.

The disconnect between the arsenal of the terrorist enemy and that arrayed against it in the post-9/11 years affirms Eisenhower's warning about the military-industrial complex's "unwarranted influence." One wonders how lobbyists and politicians maintain a straight face as they argue, as Senator Joe Lieberman has, for $2.5 billion submarines to fight terrorists who lack even a dinghy. I don't doubt that the lobbyists will continue to make their case and that the money spent toward that end will secure

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Noted.

KUCINICH v. BUSH: Impeachment is usually proposed toward the close of a President's tenure. The House tackled **Richard Nixon** deep in his second term; articles of impeachment were filed against **Harry Truman** for seizing steel mills nine months before his presidency finished; the Senate considered removing **Andrew Johnson** in the spring of his final year. This makes sense, as it takes time to recognize the seriousness of high crimes and misdemeanors, and even longer to loosen the tongues of former aides—such as ex–White House spokesman **Scott McClellan**, who will testify before the House Judiciary Committee June 20. So the thirty-five articles of impeachment Ohio Congressman **Dennis Kucinich** filed against President Bush June 9 are timely.

They are, as well, compelling; Kucinich's extensive charges detail presidential lawlessness ranging from deliberate disregard of Congress's authority to declare war, to authorizing warrantless wiretapping, to "obstruction of justice in the matter of **Valerie Plame Wilson**." Democratic leaders would prefer to play politics in this election year, but Kucinich—and allies such as Florida Congressman **Robert Wexler** and the **American Freedom Campaign**—are right to note that the Constitution does not exempt a President from accountability simply because the campaign to replace him has commenced. JOHN NICHOLS

SUBPRIME CRIBS: In 2007 the national median price for a home was $239,000. To afford a down payment and monthly mortgage installments for such a purchase, the Center for Housing Policy estimates, the home buyer's income should exceed $78,000. But for many working people—like childcare workers (median salary: $26,647), electricians ($45,406), even software programmers ($60,265)—that figure is becoming increasingly remote.

Not so for the architects of the subprime mortgage disaster, however. **Angelo Mozilo**, CEO of disgraced **Countrywide Financial**, a leading provider of subprime loans, took home a total compensation package of $48,133,155 in 2006, and as the market unraveled and foreclosure rates began to tick upward, Mozilo made hundreds of millions more by dumping company stock. Last year **Raymond McDaniel** of **Moody's Corporation**, one of three principal credit rating agencies that continued to issue sterling reports on mortgage securities backed by defaulting loans, made $7,376,555. **Lloyd Blankfein** of **Goldman Sachs**, which made a $6 billion windfall betting against those securities, received $70,324,352, enough for him to toy with the idea of making a home purchase of his own—a 10.4-acre Hamptons estate listed at $41 million.

The deal fell through, but it would not have approached the most extravagant real estate grab of the year. That honor goes to hedge-fund manager **Louis Bacon**, number 286 on *Forbes*'s list of the 400 richest Americans. In November, as home foreclosure rates reached Depression-era heights, Bacon spent $175 million on a 171,000-acre ranch in Colorado—the largest amount ever paid for a piece of residential property. MAX FRASER

HILLARY'S FEMINIST MOMENT: Five months ago, in what now feels like a different epoch, **Hillary Clinton** was addressing a packed auditorium in New Hampshire when two men suddenly began shouting, "Iron my shirt!" The air went out of the room, but as soon as the miscreants had been tossed out, Clinton shot back with relish: "Ah, the remnants of sexism—alive and well." The crowd went wild. As I sat in the auditorium it struck me that it was the most rhetorically alive I'd seen her during the entire campaign.

Fast-forward to Saturday, June 7, when Clinton officially suspended her campaign and endorsed **Barack Obama**. The speech has been praised as the best of her campaign (if not her career). "I am a woman," she said. "Like millions of women, I know there are still barriers and biases out there, often unconscious, and I want to build an America that respects and embraces the potential of every last one of us."

Clinton's campaign did not emphasize her gender for most of the seventeen months she was running. "When I was asked what it means to be a woman running for President, I always gave the same answer," she told the crowd at the National Building Museum, "that I was proud to be running as a woman but I was running because I thought I'd be the best President." It's hard to second-guess this tactical choice, since the path of a serious woman presidential contender is an uncharted one. Many of Clinton's supporters have noted, rightly, that she was operating under gendered constraints, like making voters believe a woman could be commander in chief, to name the most obvious. All of that said, the campaign began to embrace a kind of feminist core as the race went on, and it culminated in Clinton's final speech, which was, without a doubt, the most unabashed feminist address in the history of presidential politics.

Running for President can be a radicalizing experience. **Al Gore** ran as a safe centrist, and in the wake of his illegitimate defeat he became an outspoken and full-throated progressive voice. **Howard Dean** began as a DLC governor and ended up an antiwar icon and the man who has reinvested the DNC with grassroots energy. Clinton laid out her mission going forward in strong terms: "We must make sure that women and men alike understand the struggles of their grandmothers and their mothers, and that women enjoy equal opportunities, equal pay and equal respect.… Let us resolve and work toward achieving very simple propositions: there are no acceptable limits, and there are no acceptable prejudices in the twenty-first century in our country." That may not have been the raison d'être of her campaign, but recent history proves that sometimes the most ambitious goals can be sought only outside the confines of presidential politics. CHRISTOPHER HAYES

OUR MOLLY: *Nation* columnist **Katha Pollitt** has been named a finalist for **The Molly National Journalism Prize**, named after the famous leftist wit and writer **Molly Ivins**. Established by *The Texas Observer*, Ivins's longtime home, the Molly recognizes journalism that challenges conventional wisdom and embodies the "intelligence, deep thinking and passionate wit that marked Molly's work"—which Katha's 2007 columns demonstrate in spades.

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political and pundit support, but the gambit is wearing thin. So too is the effort to manufacture crises with "rogue nations" and to exaggerate the cohesion and power of the "terrorist" enemy.

The US military budget is roughly equal to those of all other nations combined, and it is inconceivable that any hostile state could emerge in the next twenty years to match the United States in a combat zone, even if no new weapons are added to the US arsenal. Indeed, our major rivals, China and Russia, are moving deeper into the fray of commercial markets rather than the theater of war games.

The benefits of a substantial cut in military spending would be dramatic, freeing government funds for other purposes, including health and education programs that would make the nation stronger. Neither party wants to raise taxes, and as a result, existing and new programs must compete for a fixed pool of tax dollars. Government funds are further limited because mandatory expenditures, like Social Security and Medicare, will not be cut, for fear of voter resentment. For these reasons, the full range of nonmandated programs, from farm subsidies to children's health insurance to medical research, are competing with the military budget.

Therefore, after mandated programs are funded, the military consumes roughly six out of ten dollars. As a consequence, increases in domestic spending must be funded by cutbacks in military spending. That is the most honest way to judge the opportunity cost of the military dollar, as in, two unneeded submarines versus health insurance for 4 million kids.

There is, however, a greater cost to having a huge permanent military: the vitality of our democracy. As we saw in the run-up to the Iraq War, the fearmongers who seek an expanded military are not above using their enormous lobbying power to influence the debate. The public will not support the military unless it feels its activities are connected with a real threat, so the military and its suppliers and other allies have to exaggerate that threat. Such is the risk of "the total influence—economic, political, even spiritual" of the military-industrial complex, which Eisenhower warned is "felt in every city, every Statehouse, every office of the federal government." It is a built-in and well-financed constituency that stresses the military option over the diplomatic one, that exaggerates the strength of the enemy rather than realistically appraises it and that desperately finds new wars to be fought.

What is going on in our name is irrational, costly and dangerous, but there are powerful vested interests that want to keep it that way. Those interests remain so strong that neither Barack Obama nor John McCain has called for cutting a military budget that is the largest since World War II. But without such cuts all the campaign promises about funding domestic programs, from education to healthcare, are an obvious fraud.

ROBERT SCHEER

Robert Scheer, a contributing editor of The Nation, *is editor of Truthdig.com and author of* The Pornography of Power: How Defense Hawks Hijacked 9/11 and Weakened America, *from which this is excerpted.*

Calvin Trillin, Deadline Poet

The Melody Hillary Clinton Finally Heard

(As sung, by a brave staffer, to the tune of "The Party's Over")

This race is over.
You lost the delegate count.
And it was March, by the way,
When math showed his lead too large to surmount.
It's time to shut down your big machine.
So just endorse him. And try not sounding mean.

This race is over.
Well, yes, that's hard to accept.
They thought you'd win in a walk,
And who could expect a staff that inept?
It's time to stop now. We know you will.
It's time to stop now. And try stopping Bill.
This race is over, my friend.

Drugged-Up Nation

America is awash in antidepressants.

Literally so.

In March the Associated Press reported that the drinking water of at least 41 million Americans is contaminated with at times voluminous cocktails of prescription drugs. Many of these contaminants are psychiatric drugs. In Philadelphia, for example, a glass of tap water brings along with it trace elements of up to fifty-six pharmaceuticals and byproducts, including Prozac, Valium and Risperdal, a drug primarily used to treat schizophrenia.

COMMENT

Also in March, IMS Health, the leading provider of prescription drug utilization figures, reported that in 2007 a remarkable 233 million prescriptions for antidepressants were written for Americans, more than for any other class of medication. No wonder the drugs are ending up in the water. (By way of clarification: this does not mean that 233 million Americans are taking antidepressants. Individuals are being given multiple prescriptions and likely not always filling them. But it does mean that tens of millions of people are taking antidepressants—according to some studies, close to 10 percent of US adults.)

That Prozac and even stronger drugs would be in our water was predicted by the late novelist Walker Percy. His last work, *The Thanatos Syndrome*, was published in 1987, just before Prozac arrived on the scene. In the novel Dr. More, a Louisiana psychiatrist, notices that his patients have suddenly become vacant and indifferent. Their anxieties have been removed but so have their passions and foibles and eccentricities—all that, according to Percy, makes us human. Dr. More eventually un-

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covers a government-industrial conspiracy, in which "Heavy Sodium" is being put in the drinking water. The masterminds of the Heavy Sodium plot point to its impressive outcomes: reduced drug abuse and crime, improved "social welfare." Unfortunately there are those pesky side effects—loss of language skills, sexual problems, child abuse, numbness…

But even Percy wouldn't have predicted the staggering numbers reported recently. He was just writing about one Louisiana parish, not a national phenomenon. Which brings up the question: how did it happen that we are all drinking Heavy Sodium, in all its forms? How did Philadelphia get on Risperdal?

At the heart of the problem lies a confusion between illness and suffering. Psychiatric drugs can be lifesaving for the people they were originally developed and intended for—people with severe conditions, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and major depression. But under pressure from brilliant drug marketing, managed care and the relentless expansion of psychiatric diagnosis in recent decades, treatments that are effective for serious mental illnesses have been generalized ever outward to far lesser conditions, and even to ordinary life problems and stresses. I've talked with many people who have said that they were prescribed antidepressants (now mainly prescribed by family doctors) because of financial and relationship problems—in effect, for "my marriage is awful disorder," "can't afford my SUV disorder" and "don't like my boss disorder" (actual reasons for antidepressant use told to me by patients). These situations may be very painful, but are they mental illnesses? Nondrug approaches are often more effective for milder conditions and are typically overlooked. And as with Percy's Heavy Sodium, the side effects of the antidepressants are greater than were first appreciated. In particular, getting on and getting off the drugs can prove very difficult for a significant number of patients.

By the end of *The Thanatos Syndrome*, Percy's hero uncovers the conspiracy, the water is cleaned up and the people return to their quirky and difficult—but very much alive and human—selves. No such luck, it appears, in contemporary America, where we continue to ask the drugs to do what they were never intended for: to medicate and subdue the more troublesome aspects of the human condition. CHARLES BARBER

Charles Barber is a lecturer in psychiatry at Yale University and the author, most recently, of Comfortably Numb: How Psychiatry Is Medicating a Nation *(Pantheon).*

by BARRY ROCKWELL

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Eric Alterman

Silence of the (MSM) Lambs

The past few weeks have been thrilling politically. Barack Obama's victory in the Democratic primary offers our country not merely the opportunity to turn the page on America's most destructive presidency but also to open up as exciting and promising a new chapter in our history as any since the birth of the New Deal. Alas, one of the myriad roadblocks standing in the way of this hopeful new direction are the members of our mainstream media.

For instance, when Scott McClellan—following Paul O'Neill, Richard Clarke, John DiIulio and Matthew Dowd—reconfirmed virtually all the significant charges leveled by Bush critics against this corrupt, extreme and incompetent Administration, the reactions of the MSM were difficult to distinguish from those of the Bushites. Sadly typical was that of Mike Allen, chief political writer of the allegedly nonpartisan *Politico*, who complained that McClellan had adopted "the vocabulary, rhetoric of the left wing haters," demonstrating once again that anyone who tells the truth about this Administration—even someone with impeccable insider credentials—will be called a "hater" for doing so.

No less disturbing was the sight of ABC News nightly anchor Charles Gibson actually praising the MSM for their mindless (and spineless) credulity. Gibson, speaking with Katie Couric and Brian Williams on the occasion of the release of McClellan's book, insisted, "I think the questions were asked," before adding, "It was just a drumbeat of support from the Administration. It is not our job to debate them. It is our job to ask the questions."

And so the man who holds the most prestigious and influential position at ABC News does not think it the job of a "journalist" to engage in a "debate" over the facts with an Administration bent on misleading the public into war. Apparently the job description requires nothing more than to "ask questions," accept the answers and salute smartly.

To make matters worse, Gibson does not appear much interested in getting his facts straight, either. Recall his repeated badgering of the candidates during the debates of the party of the working class to embrace tax policies designed to benefit rich folk like multimillion-dollar network anchors and their friends. He cited statistics apparently snatched wholesale from the ether and easily disproved by ten minutes of Googling (see my May 19 "Liberal Media" column, titled "Mickey Mouse Media"). This time around, Gibson picked the coverage of Colin Powell's now-infamous February 2003 United Nations speech as an example of the allegedly tough-minded coverage he believed common.

As it happens, Charles Hanley, an Associated Press reporter, subjected Powell's claims to detailed scrutiny in light of what was known at the time as well as later revelations and found that many of Powell's controversial assertions could have been easily challenged by reporters who refused to swallow the propaganda Gibson and his colleagues were so disinclined to "debate."

Meanwhile, Gilbert Cranberg, former editorial page editor of the *Des Moines Register*, examined the media reaction to Powell's UN presentation, pointing out that while Powell "cited almost no verifiable sources," his address was met with little but full-throated cheerleading from Gibson and his colleagues. Examine, for instance, Gibson himself (as *Salon*'s Glenn Greenwald did). On February 6, 2003, Gibson's guests were former CIA Director James Woolsey and Terence Taylor of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. Gibson uttered not a syllable of skepticism about Powell's misleading presentation. (Typical query: "Of all the biological and chemical weapons that he outlined, and the means of delivery, what's the most frightening?")

Gibson further misleads in his defense of himself and his colleagues when he speaks of the difficulty of covering a debate about war in which there was nothing but "a drumbeat of support from the Administration." This is simply false. On September 27, 2002, Ted Kennedy gave a speech at Johns Hopkins University in which he demolished every argument then extant. Kennedy received a total of thirty-one words that night from Gibson on *ABC World News Tonight*. A similar fate—involving condescension, mockery or silence—met the prophetic statements of the likes of former Vice President Al Gore, former Chief of Central Command Gen. Anthony Zinni, former National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski, former weapons inspector Scott Ritter and director of the International Atomic Energy Agency Mohamed ElBaradei, to say nothing of the twenty-three Senators and 133 Representatives who voted against Bush's bullying war resolution and the millions of Americans who joined the Dean campaign, MoveOn.org and other antiwar organizations. (Watch Bill Moyers's documentary *Buying the War*, should you have any doubt about any of the above.)

On June 6, after years of delay and denial amounting to the functional equivalent of a concerted cover-up, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence finally released its 170-page report on the Bush Administration's deliberate perversion of prewar intelligence to justify its calamitous rush to war. The committee's chair, Jay Rockefeller, said the campaign was "fundamentally misleading and led the nation to war on false premises."

Aided by a campaign composed of Bush Administration lies, the cheerleading of the liberal hawks and the complicity and cowardice of the media corporations—who decide most of what we read, see and hear—Gibson and company helped enable the catastrophe we are mired in today in Iraq. With evidence of their collective failure mounting daily, they attempt to respond with a falsely self-flattering narrative to justify this moral, professional and intellectual dereliction of duty. Don't believe a word of it. And Senator Obama: know thine enemies… ■

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Naomi Klein

Obama's Chicago Boys

Barack Obama waited just three days after Hillary Clinton pulled out of the race to declare, on CNBC, "Look. I am a pro-growth, free-market guy. I love the market."

Demonstrating that this is no mere spring fling, he has appointed 37-year-old Jason Furman to head his economic policy team. Furman is one of Wal-Mart's most prominent defenders, anointing the company a "progressive success story." On the campaign trail, Obama blasted Clinton for sitting on the Wal-Mart board and pledged, "I won't shop there." For Furman, however, it's Wal-Mart's critics who are the real threat: the "efforts to get Wal-Mart to raise its wages and benefits" are creating "collateral damage" that is "way too enormous and damaging to working people and the economy more broadly for me to sit by idly and sing 'Kum-Ba-Ya' in the interests of progressive harmony."

Obama's love of markets and his desire for "change" are not inherently incompatible. "The market has gotten out of balance," he says, and it most certainly has. Many trace this profound imbalance back to the ideas of Milton Friedman, who launched a counter-revolution against the New Deal from his perch at the University of Chicago economics department. And here there are more problems, because Obama—who taught law at the University of Chicago for a decade—is thoroughly embedded in the mind-set known as the Chicago School.

He chose as his chief economic adviser Austan Goolsbee, a University of Chicago economist on the left side of a spectrum that stops at the center-right. Goolsbee, unlike his more Friedmanite colleagues, sees inequality as a problem. His primary solution, however, is more education—a line you can also get from Alan Greenspan. In their hometown, Goolsbee has been eager to link Obama to the Chicago School. "If you look at his platform, at his advisers, at his temperament, the guy's got a healthy respect for markets," he told *Chicago* magazine. "It's in the ethos of the [University of Chicago], which is something different from saying he is laissez-faire."

Another of Obama's Chicago fans is 39-year-old billionaire Kenneth Griffin, CEO of the hedge fund Citadel Investment Group. Griffin, who gave the maximum allowable donation to Obama, is something of a poster boy for an unbalanced economy. He got married at Versailles and had the after-party at Marie Antoinette's vacation spot (Cirque du Soleil performed)—and he is one of the staunchest opponents of closing the hedge-fund tax loophole. While Obama talks about toughening trade rules with China, Griffin has been bending the few barriers that do exist. Despite sanctions prohibiting the sale of police equipment to China, Citadel has been pouring money into controversial Chinese-based security companies that are putting the local population under unprecedented levels of surveillance.

Now is the time to worry about Obama's Chicago Boys and their commitment to fending off serious attempts at regulation. It was in the two and a half months between winning the 1992 election and being sworn into office that Bill Clinton did a U-turn on the economy. He had campaigned promising to revise NAFTA, adding labor and environmental provisions and to invest in social programs. But two weeks before his inauguration, he met with then–Goldman Sachs chief Robert Rubin, who convinced him of the urgency of embracing austerity and more liberalization. Rubin told PBS, "President Clinton actually made the decision before he stepped into the Oval Office, during the transition, on what was a dramatic change in economic policy."

Furman, a leading disciple of Rubin, was chosen to head the Brookings Institution's Hamilton Project, the think tank Rubin helped found to argue for reforming, rather than abandoning, the free-trade agenda. Add to that Goolsbee's February meeting with Canadian consulate officials, who left with the distinct impression that they had been instructed not to take Obama's anti-NAFTA campaigning seriously, and there is every reason for concern about a replay of 1993.

The irony is that there is absolutely no reason for this backsliding. The movement launched by Friedman, introduced by Ronald Reagan and entrenched under Clinton, faces a profound legitimacy crisis around the world. Nowhere is this more evident than at the University of Chicago itself. In mid-May, when university president Robert Zimmer announced the creation of a $200 million Milton Friedman Institute, an economic research center devoted to continuing and augmenting the Friedman legacy, a controversy erupted. More than 100 faculty members signed a letter of protest. "The effects of the neoliberal global order that has been put in place in recent decades, strongly buttressed by the Chicago School of Economics, have by no means been unequivocally positive," the letter states. "Many would argue that they have been negative for much of the world's population."

When Friedman died in 2006, such bold critiques of his legacy were largely absent. The adoring memorials spoke only of grand achievement, with one of the more prominent appreciations appearing in the *New York Times*—written by Austan Goolsbee. Yet now, just two years later, Friedman's name is seen as a liability even at his own alma mater. So why has Obama chosen this moment, when all illusions of a consensus have dropped away, to go Chicago retro?

The news is not all bad. Furman claims he will be drawing on the expertise of two Keynesian economists: Jared Bernstein of the Economic Policy Institute and James Galbraith, son of Friedman's nemesis John Kenneth Galbraith. Our "current economic crisis," Obama recently said, did not come from nowhere. It is "the logical conclusion of a tired and misguided philosophy that has dominated Washington for far too long."

True enough. But before Obama can purge Washington of the scourge of Friedmanism, he has some housecleaning to do. ■

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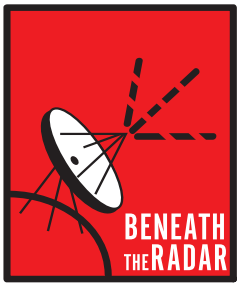
Gary Younge

Obama and the Power of Symbols

After France won the 1998 World Cup, the French commentariat went into overdrive. Unlike the country's political class, the team contained a broad racial and ethnic cross section of French society. The image of the soccer team's star player, Zinédine Zidane, who is of Algerian descent, was projected on the Arc de Triomphe. "What better example of our unity and our diversity than this magnificent team?" asked Socialist Prime Minister Lionel Jospin. Before the first whistle had been blown for the next World Cup, in 2002, the French electorate were clearly having second thoughts about unity and diversity. In presidential elections that year Jospin was beaten into third place by French far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, who won 17 percent of the vote.

There are symbols, and there is substance—the way things look, and the way things are. But in between there is the way things might be: a sense of possibility that image might precede content or even provide space for it to emerge. A leap of faith. Some wishful thinking. Such is the tension in the American left's response to Obama's candidacy. There are some—let's call them dreamers—who believe his nomination marks a paradigm shift in progressive politics in this country. And there are others—let's call them materialists—who dismiss the excitement surrounding his nomination as little more than an emotional distraction from what really matters: war, foreclosures, civil liberties, the Middle East, global warming.



On these issues, point out the materialists, Obama is little more than a mainstream Democrat offering sops that are better than the Republicans' but inadequate to the needs of working-class Americans and the world at large. If you look at what he does rather than how he looks, they continue, then there is no more reason to be excited about him than about John Kerry.

To evoke the historic significance of an Obama victory is to provoke the materialists' scorn. They ask for one scrap of evidence that the election of a black President will improve the lives of black people in this country. The dreamer mutters something vague about role models for young black men.

The materialists have a point. In a country whose self-image is underpinned by notions of social fluidity and eternal progress, it is possible to overemphasize the ramifications of Obama's nomination. Those who claim that having a black President will present a positive image of America to the rest of the world must remember that for the past eight years that face has been Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice—and that has not worked out so well for the rest of the world. Moreover, electoral progress does not necessarily translate into social progress. The late Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan was the first elected woman leader of a Muslim state. But her prime ministership did very little for the women of Pakistan.

Indeed, Obama's candidacy is not consistent with the social rise of African-Americans but aberrant from it. According to a November report by the Pew Research Center, black Americans are more dissatisfied with their progress than at any time in the past twenty-five years. Another Pew survey released at the same time shows that almost half (45 percent) of African-Americans born to middle-income parents in the post–civil rights era have descended into poverty or near poverty as adults.

The very arguments advanced by the dreamers can be turned back on them by their ideological opponents. Right-wing anti–affirmative action advocate Ward Connerly says he choked up at Obama's nomination speech. "The entire argument for race preferences is that society is institutionally racist and institutionally sexist, and you need affirmative action to level the playing field," Connerly told the *New York Times*. "The historic success of Senator Obama, as well as Senator Clinton, dismantles that argument."

So the materialist arguments have their merits, as far as they go. The trouble is, they don't go that far because they are crippled by a lack of imagination.

Materialists do not deny the energy and expectations Obama's candidacy has unleashed. They simply refuse to engage with either the reasons underlying it or the potential it might hold. In a country where 80 percent of the people feel things are heading in the wrong direction, a huge number feel they have found a liberal change agent. Materialists have the option of insisting that all these people are deluded or of finding out why they believe what they do.

Obama's race is no insignificant matter. True, he did not run on an antiracist platform. But after considerable reflection, black people flocked to him anyway. As racially charged attacks on him intensified, so did their support for him solidify. He may not have pursued identity politics, but that black Americans identified with him racially made a difference. Those who claimed that the Democratic Party's problem was that its emphasis on gender and race had alienated white working-class men must now explain why it took a white woman and a black man to give them the best shot at the White House in more than a decade.

Between them, the young and the black increased their share of the Democratic primary electorate by roughly 25 percent compared with 2004—two constituencies that can now assert their place in the Democratic coalition as never before. If the materialists have an alternative project that could engage this number of people in progressive politics, they are keeping it very quiet. In the meantime, you do not have to binge-drink the Obama Kool-Aid to see the possibilities here.

We can try to engage and direct this energy toward a more progressive agenda or abandon it in favor of a more reactionary one. We can pressure his campaign to meet expectations or abandon them to disappointment and cynicism.

While symbols should never be mistaken for substance, they are not insubstantial either. ■

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The Nation.

The Rich and the Rest of Us

by JOHN CAVANAGH AND CHUCK COLLINS

Over the past three decades, market-worshiping politicians and their corporate backers have engineered the most colossal redistribution of wealth in modern world history, a redistribution from the bottom up, from working people to a tiny global elite.

This special issue of *The Nation* exposes the widespread costs of this rising inequality and offers a blueprint on how to reverse course. We will never achieve social and economic justice for those at the bottom of our economic pyramid until we tackle wealth concentration at the top.

Doug Henwood begins the issue by placing our current extreme inequality in historical context. We now live, he writes, in a second Gilded Age. Today, as in the robber baron era a century ago, the gap between those at the top and the rest of us is simply staggering. The richest 1 percent of Americans currently hold wealth worth $16.8 trillion, nearly $2 trillion more than the bottom 90 percent. A worker making $10 an hour would have to labor for more than 10,000 years to earn what one of the 400 richest Americans pocketed in 2005.

How vast has our parallel universe of the ultrarich become? The *Wall Street Journal* now dedicates a full-time beat reporter, Robert Frank, to cover what he calls Richistan. Richistan did not suddenly appear on the American scene. Our top-heavy era has evolved from a heavily bankrolled effort by conservatives and corporations to instill blind faith in the market as the magic elixir that can solve any problem. This three-decade war against common sense has preached that tax cuts for the rich help the poor, that labor unions keep workers from prospering, that regulations protecting consumers attack freedom. Duly inspired, our elected officials have rewritten the rules that run our economy—on taxes and trade, on wage

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policies and public spending—to benefit wealthy asset owners and global corporations.

To reverse this reckless course, we need to change our nation's dominant political narrative and restore faith in the critical role that government must play to protect the common good. But we can't stop there. We need to confront directly the threat posed by this inequality.

That won't be easy. Too many Americans see the enormous concentration of our nation's wealth as a symptom of a sick society, not a cause. Indeed, most of our politicians and pundits refuse to treat it as any sort of problem at all. They may sometimes bewail particularly unseemly CEO paychecks. They may twitter occasionally about the latest bilious billionaire extravagance. But that's it. The Senate couldn't even manage to eliminate a tax loophole for gazillionaire hedge-fund managers last year. And even progressive wish lists tend to call only for a return to pre–George W. Bush tax rates, a step that would undo a mere one-sixth of the rise in income inequality we have experienced since the late 1970s, according to the Brookings Institution.

We cannot adequately address any of the significant problems we face as long as our country tolerates grand concentrations of private wealth.

Future historians, we have no doubt, will note a certain irony here. The "real problems" we Americans face owe their intensity—and often their origin—to issues of income and wealth distribution our society simply refuses to address.

Take, for instance, the mortgage meltdown, which has even sober analysts contemplating the prospect of economic collapse. The concentration of financial resources at the top of the economic ladder has left average families with too little income to keep the "real" economy—the production and distribution of goods for everyday use—strong and vibrant. With household debt at its highest level since 1933, families simply can't maintain their former levels of purchasing. Meanwhile, rich investors, unable to find high rates of return in the real economy, have turned our financial markets into speculative casinos where few rules apply. What happened to the rules? In any age, the more wealth concentrates, the more political power concentrates in the hands of the wealthy. In our increasingly unequal age, these wealthy have deregulated the lending market and created a jungle where the rich can get endlessly richer, by any means necessary.

We cannot adequately address the mortgage crisis, or any other significant problems we face, as long as our country tolerates grand concentrations of private wealth. In April 2007, for example, a national coalition of organizations under the umbrella of Half in Ten (www.halfinten.org) put forward a broad set of proposals to cut poverty in half over the next decade. But this effort will likely fall short as long as concentrated wealth defines our nation's political priorities. And until we seriously tax the holders of concentrated wealth, we will lack the funding resources that any bold poverty-fighting initiative demands.

So, have the plutocrats won? Has a generation of Reagan/Bush/Clinton/Bush rule left us with a polity that will privilege great fortunes far into the future? Should we accept extreme inequality as a fact of life? Or should citizens who care about our democracy consider grand concentrations of private fortune the central obstacle to social justice—as our forebears in the Progressive Era once did—and vow to do battle for a significantly more equal America?

We need to heed the lesson imparted by those who reversed the first Gilded Age: over the first half of the twentieth century, organized labor and other populist and progressive social movements advanced a program that explicitly aimed to reduce concentrated wealth and power. They and their successors fought hard to lift up the bottom and bring down the top, through efforts as varied as the original GI Bill and high tax rates on high incomes. Thanks to their efforts, our nation went from the Gilded Age of Newport mansions to a postwar era that celebrated a thriving middle class, full of economically secure families who owned their own homes and could afford to send their kids to college. Sarah Anderson and Sam Pizzigati, in their contribution to this special issue, show us how we can do this again. They lay out a practical guide on how to reduce our ignoble concentrations of wealth, a necessary step toward realizing efforts to reduce poverty, invest in green energy systems, rebuild our infrastructure and expand educational and economic opportunity for all.

Any successful mobilization against plutocracy must first dramatize the high price that wealth concentration exacts from the rest of us. In her contribution Barbara Ehrenreich laments a consequence of extreme inequality that few of us have adequately recognized: the plutocratic monopolization of our nation's beautiful places. Gabriel Thompson tells the story of extreme inequality in one neighborhood—juxtaposing the hedge-fund titans who occupy the top floors of two Manhattan office buildings with the low-wage workers who guard their doorways and deliver their lunches.

The 2008 election could help open the door to tackling inequality. While previous leading presidential candidates have shied away from the issue, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton have drawn attention to problems such as the staggering CEO–worker pay gap and tax loopholes for hedge-fund managers. And yet no President is likely to embrace a bold agenda on inequality without heavy pressure from unions, religious groups, small business, environmentalists and other activists. Concerted citizen action helped end the first Gilded Age and usher in a period of broadly shared economic well-being after World War II. Today we have the opportunity, and the imperative, to do so once again. ■

John Cavanagh is the director of the Washington–based Institute for Policy Studies. Chuck Collins directs the institute's program on Inequality and the Common Good and coordinates the Working Group on Extreme Inequality (www.extremeinequality.org).

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If patriotism means "country before self," today's moral framework certainly is *not* patriotic. We can do better—and in these challenging times, we must.

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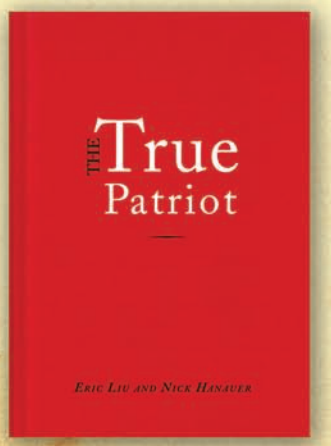

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Our Gilded Age

Today's elite, though they spend on a grand scale, often affect a "just folks" presentation.

by DOUG HENWOOD

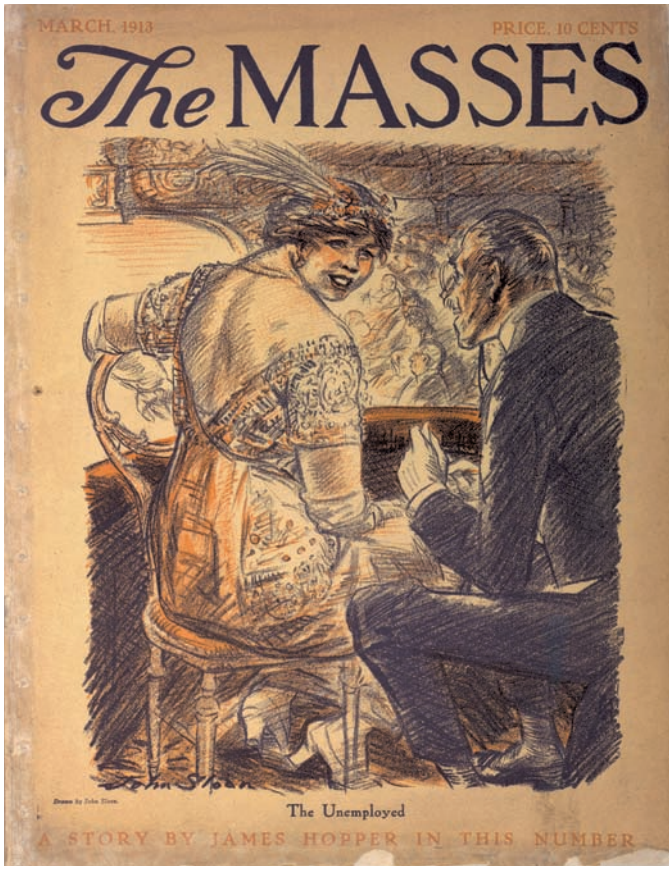
It has become a cliché to say that we live in a new Gilded Age. True enough, up to a point. Money, mostly new money, rules politics and culture. Corporations merge into ever larger corporations. You have to go back to before World War I to match today's levels of income and wealth inequality.

In some ways, the second Gilded Age is worse than the first. Sure, we live longer now, more of us can read and you don't have to be a white man to be able to vote. But to prove my point, consider two big parties, thrown 110 years apart.

In February 1897 elite lawyer Bradley Martin and his wife, Cornelia, threw a costume ball at the Waldorf. J.P. Morgan dressed as Molière, John Jacob Astor dressed as Henry of Navarre and brandished a sword covered in jewels, and fifty women dressed as Marie Antoinette. But the hosts were so nervous about "men of socialistic tendencies" that they surrounded the hotel with Pinkertons and had the first-floor windows nailed shut.

In February 2007 Blackstone CEO Steve Schwarzman threw himself a sixtieth birthday party for hundreds of his closest friends. Rod Stewart sang for about half an hour, earning a million for his efforts. The party was at the Seventh Regiment Armory on Park Avenue—just seventeen blocks north of the Waldorf. The building has a rich history. In the second half of the nineteenth century the Seventh Regiment, nominally a state National Guard unit, was a kind of private militia staffed by the men of New York's upper class; though they didn't like to fight much, they did put down a strike or two. And the armory itself—decorations by Louis Tiffany—was built at the end of the 1870s (with private funds) as part of an urban-fortress building boom driven by the need to suppress the restive working class. We had populists in the heartland, socialists in the cities and labor radicals everywhere, who wanted to subdue corporate power and redistribute some income. The confrontations were sharp and often violent—but that history is largely forgotten. After the bomb-sniffing dogs had done their work, the biggest security challenge at Schwarzman's party seems to have been keeping the army of photographers safely penned up and nosy onlookers out. No worries about men with socialistic tendencies climbing in the windows to do their revolutionary mischief.

After the Martins' party, there was a huge public outcry at its egregious too-muchness, and the couple exiled themselves to England to escape their critics. After his party, Schwarzman got a little bad press, and some unpleasant questions were raised about the low tax rate his private-equity business operates under, but he was hardly driven into exile. In fact, Schwarzman remains comfortably lodged in one of the most spectacular residences in New York City, a Park Avenue apartment that once belonged to John D. Rockefeller Jr.



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How an earlier era depicted its ruling class

It's not just the absence of the socialist threat at Schwarzman's party that marks the difference between the Gilded Ages, though that's pretty striking. The contrast in social pretensions is almost as striking. As Sven Beckert shows in his excellent book *The Monied Metropolis*, the elite of the first Gilded Age dressed as royalty at the Martins' costume ball because they were consciously trying to project themselves as an upper class in a nominally republican, egalitarian society. Our elite, though obviously not afraid to spend on a grand scale, often affect a "just folks" presentation. So, though Schwarzman has his personal chef prepare him stone crabs that cost $400 apiece for a casual Saturday lunch, he hired the profoundly middlebrow Rod Stewart to croon at his birthday party. And though Schwarzman is usually photographed in a business suit, and occasionally in formalwear, many of his Wall Street colleagues prefer open-necked shirts and khakis as their work clothes. Class conflict was a lot more open, on both sides of the divide, a century ago.

Of course, the style of dress that's come to be known as hedge-fund casual isn't bought at your local Nordstrom's. A couple of years ago, the *Wall Street Journal* put together a representative outfit that a male hedge-funder would wear to work in Greenwich, Connecticut (the epicenter of the industry): shoes by Cole Haan, $365; trousers by Ermenegildo Zegna, $495; shirt

Doug Henwood, who edits the Left Business Observer, *is working on a study of the current American ruling class, whoever that is.*

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Reverend Jesse Jackson is a longstanding **Nation** *reader.*

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by Armani, $315; messenger bag (no dorky briefcase!) by Tumi, $395. Total, not including underwear and socks: $1,570—not all that much below $1,874, the average household's annual expenditure on clothing in 2006. But that's just for the hedge-fund rank and file; for the top guys, who take in a billion a year or more, it's private jets and even personal submarines.

Still, that just-folks presentation, even if it does come with a high price tag, seems to help encourage aspirational overconsumption by the upper middle class. If they sort of look like you, then maybe you can sort of live like them. So, outfit the kitchen with a Sub-Zero refrigerator and a Wolf cooktop. You won't have an in-house chef to do the cooking for you, $400 crabs are a little beyond your reach and you may have to tap the home equity line to pay for the appliances—but you, too, can feel like a participant in the new Gilded Age. Or could, until the job market headed south and the credit markets froze up.

And what about the sources of the fortunes that dominated the two Gilded Ages? The elite of the nineteenth century was fresh from building a massive industrial infrastructure, like steel mills and a transcontinental railroad system. Yes, it came with massive amounts of securities fraud (a reminder that financial chicanery is hardly a recent innovation in American economic history), not to mention waste, surplus capacity and shoddy workmanship. But it did result in the transformation of the United States from a relative backwater to a global industrial power.

How did Schwarzman and his colleagues in the private-equity and hedge-fund rackets, probably the most prominent members of today's overclass, make their money? Mainly by taking over existing assets and milking them for fees, dividends and interest payments. Sure, there are some new fortunes that come from high technology, but the biggest of those are the piles accumulated by Bill Gates and his Microsoft colleagues Paul Allen and Steve Ballmer (respectively numbers 1, 11 and 16 on the Forbes 400 list). Microsoft has made its money mainly from the monopoly status of its mediocre Windows operating system. The encouragement of innovation is one of the most common rationales for the accumulation of large fortunes put forward by the system's publicists, but it would be hard to name any significant ways Microsoft has been an innovator.

Oh, and there's the Walton family (three tied at number 12 and one at 16), whose fortune comes from Wal-Mart, whose low prices have helped the working class cope with the downward mobility that Wal-Mart has helped create.

People on the left are always looking to recession or worse as some sort of wake-up call to the masses, who were narcotized during the boom times but will be awakened by harder times. The historical record on this isn't all that encouraging. There was the great example of the 1930s, but that may be the exception that proves the rule, since it was so extreme. We aren't likely to see a 25 percent unemployment rate again, as we did in 1933, and it's hard to wish for a rerun, unless you like the idea of putting 30 million more Americans out of work to make a political point. The 1950s, a decade that saw two recessions; the 1970s, a decade known for a deep recession and persistent stagflation; and the early 1980s, when the economy experienced its worst downturn since the 1930s, are not known for progressive mobilization.

But you do have to wonder what will happen to the political culture now that the second Gilded Age seems to be drawing to a close. (The fact that Schwarzman and his partner, Pete Peterson, took Blackstone public in 2007 suggests that they agree: it looks like they were cashing in at a market top, as I suggested in the July 16/23, 2007, issue of this magazine.) The housing bust will probably be a drag on the economy, and on household finances, for quite some time; and the job market, which turned in its weakest performance of any post–World War II expansion between 2001 and 2007, is now contracting and likely to continue to do so. The first Gilded Age was succeeded by the corporate-friendly reforms of the Progressive Era—but whatever small-p progressive content they had was stimulated by all the political ferment during the boom. It's likely we'll see some kind of re-regulation of the economic system in the coming years, but what kind and how much will we see, when the fat years were so politically quiescent? ■

Name Our Epoch!

Historians divide history into epochs. The Gilded Age and the Great Depression, for example, are familiar to most Americans. Our current epoch, however—a period that has seen soaring grand fortunes for a new American superrich and a fading American Dream for nearly everyone else—lacks a label. Some commentators have tried to supply one. Paul Krugman calls our past three decades of growing inequality the Great Divergence. Berkeley economist Harley Shaiken speaks about the Great Disconnect, his tag for years of stagnant and declining wages amid a growing economy.

Here at *The Nation*, we'd like to speed this naming process along. That's why we're joining the Institute for Policy Studies and announcing a fabulous new contest chock-full of redeeming social significance. We invite you to help us Name Our Epoch! Entering couldn't be easier. Just send an e-mail to NameOurEpoch@ips-dc.org with your suggested label for our excruciatingly unequal times. Put your thinking cap on now—we need your entry by July 4. Our all-star progressive panel of judges—historian Howard Zinn, journalist Barbara Ehrenreich and novelist Walter Mosley—will pore over the entries and announce a winner.

What's in this for you if you win—besides the eternal gratitude of humankind? Win the Name Our Epoch sweepstakes and you'll receive a private corporate jet! Can't afford the rising cost of jet fuel? No problem—this jet's a model. Need more incentive? Our contest winner will also receive personally autographed books written by each of our three distinguished judges.

So don't delay. Our epoch desperately needs a label. After all, if we can't name the misfortune that has been visited upon us, how are we ever going to end it?

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Meet the Wealth Gap

Top dogs and underdogs brush shoulders in Midtown Manhattan.

by GABRIEL THOMPSON

For a delivery worker, perched on a bicycle with plastic bags of food dangling from each handlebar, Manhattan's East Side offers many opportunities for a trip to the emergency room. I learn this one May afternoon as I trail 26-year-old Apolinar Perez, a chubby-faced Mexican immigrant who skillfully steers his black mountain bike through the chaos. A taxi switches lanes without warning, nearly clipping my front wheel. Suit-clad men and women stride purposefully into the street, too wrapped up in their phone conversations to notice they're crossing against the light. A black Suburban with tinted windows screeches to a halt in front of us, directly in the path of the bike lane.

Perez arrived in New York City five years ago, after crossing the Texas border in the back of a truck while hidden beneath a pile of children's toys. Since then, he's delivered food for the same Italian restaurant, working eleven hours a day, six days a week. Pay couldn't be simpler: before heading home each night, one of the managers hands him a $20 bill. That's an hourly wage of $1.82—well below the state's $4.85 minimum wage for delivery workers. The rest of his earnings come through tips, which average $60 a shift. There's no overtime or healthcare, no sick days or workers' comp. I inquire about any benefits I might be forgetting. "For Christmas they give me $50," he says. "Sometimes."

I first encounter Perez as he is locking up his bike in front of 500 Park Avenue, a large, glassy building that serves as the headquarters for the hedge fund Caxton Associates, which manages more than $11 billion. Caxton was founded in 1983 by Bruce Kovner, a broad-shouldered 63-year-old with bushy eyebrows and a ruddy face who was among the top-ten highest-paid hedge-fund managers in 2006, with an income of $715 million. Though he has never shied away from public involvement—Kovner is chair of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI)—he does shy away from the press (an assistant told me he never speaks to the media). Perez wraps a chain around his bike's frame and attaches it to a post, then grabs two orders of pasta and heads through the revolving doors. Every lunch hour in Manhattan, the very poor meet the very rich. Today, wealth will be distributed downward, slightly: Perez emerges with a $2 tip. "I usually don't get very good tips from the fancy buildings," he will later tell me.

Four blocks away from the offices of Caxton Associates is 590 Madison Avenue, a forty-three-story building made of steel and granite, boasting a backup generator that can service its corporate tenants for four days without refueling. Behind a

PETER O. ZIERLEIN

desk on the first floor stands security guard Timothy Williams. Williams, who has been an employee of TNM Protection for a year, is a 24-year-old African-American who, like Perez, lives in the Bronx, the borough with the lowest rents in New York City. After graduating from high school in 2002 he joined the Army, partly in the hope that it would help pay for college. He served in Iraq from August 2004 to July 2005, fighting the war that Kovner's AEI so aggressively pushed. AEI "Freedom Scholar" Michael Ledeen hoped the United States would turn the Middle East "into a caldron," and AEI fellow Richard Perle promised that Iraq's oil would pay for the reconstruction. "Maybe it won't work perfectly," admitted AEI vice president Danielle Pletka on the eve of the invasion, "but does that mean we shouldn't try?"

Williams, though, is disillusioned. "I was for going into Afghanistan, but I'm against Iraq," he tells me at the beginning of a noon-to-midnight shift. Wearing a dark suit with an American flag pin affixed to his lapel, he says that his time in Iraq convinced him that the mission wasn't working, which is one of the reasons he cast his primary vote for Obama.

Now back home, he's earning $12.50 an hour, with no union and no healthcare. "This is just a job I'll have for a little bit," he explains. He's able to get by with the help of the $1,300 monthly checks he receives from the GI Bill, which also covers his tuition at Monroe College, a private school in the Bronx geared toward working students, where he's pursuing an associate's degree. He plans to join the NYPD and hopes one day to become a lawyer. In the meantime, he has joined the National Guard—"I see

Gabriel Thompson, a Brooklyn-based journalist, is the author of There's No José Here *and* Calling All Radicals. *His website is wherethesilenceis.org.*
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Bulldozer sales in America have been booming. Road builders need them to level rolling hills into concrete interchanges and bypasses. Developers need them to turn farmland into housing developments and shopping malls. You can find big earthmoving equipment throughout America, turning our most picturesque land into suburban sprawl, while adding to some of the worst traffic problems in the world. But traffic is just one of the problems facing America as a result of population growth wildly out of control. Schools and emergency rooms are bursting at the seams, and public infrastructure is under great stress. Property taxes are on the rise. Yet the bulldozers keep on coming, ripping up some of the most beautiful farms and forests in the world and turning them into concrete and asphalt suburbs. But with U.S. census projections indicating our population will explode from 300 million today to 400 million in thirty years and 600 million before 2100*, bulldozer sales should keep on booming. Unless we take action today. The Pew Hispanic Research Center projects 82% of the country's massive population increase, between 2005 and 2050, will result from immigration. And with every new U.S. resident, whether from births or immigration, comes further degradation of America's natural treasures. There's not much we can do to reclaim the hundreds of millions of acres already destroyed. But we can do something about what's left. Visit our websites to find out how you can help.

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the military as a place where I can actually have a career"—and recently learned he'll be sent back to Iraq next year.

Journey twenty-nine floors up from where Williams stands guard and the growing disparities of wealth again come into stark contrast. Here you will find the headquarters of Paulson & Company, a $32 billion hedge fund, this one run by John Paulson, the highest-paid individual in 2007. By short-selling the subprime market, he earned $3.7 billion last year. (In January, after a year in which 2.2 million households filed for foreclosure, Paulson told the *Wall Street Journal*, "I've never been involved in a trade with such unlimited upside.")

For Williams, who would likely shepherd Paulson to safety in the event of a building emergency, that upside is hard to discern: he would have to work more than twenty years as a security guard to earn what Paulson made last year in one hour.

On the East Side of Manhattan two very distinct classes of New Yorkers cross paths every day: the working poor (undocumented immigrants and citizens alike), who cook, deliver, secure and protect—for little money and no benefits—and the titans of finance, hedge-fund executives and heads of private-equity firms, who stare at numbers on screens while moving other people's money in and out of stocks and commodities or buying and selling companies, and whose wealth is expanding so quickly they have difficulty figuring out what to do with it.

Security guard and Iraq War vet Timothy Williams makes $12.50 an hour. He protects hedge-funder John Paulson, who made $3.7 billion last year.

While workers in the first group struggle to survive on wages that don't get much higher than $10 an hour, the financial elite continue to break income records. The just-released 2007 earnings figures find the top five hedge-fund managers all clearing $1.5 billion. As *Alpha* magazine notes, "The top 25 on the list earned an average $892 million, up from $532 million in 2006"—in a year when the economy began to stall, the group needing no help ended up nearly doubling its income. The top ten earners alone made a combined $16.1 billion, more than the GDP of Nicaragua.

Some hedge funds took a hit with the downturn: Kovner of Caxton Associates saw his annual earnings drop to a measly $100 million. But even in a down year, an executive like Kovner has plenty of money to spend—and he isn't shy about protecting his interests. Along with being the chair of AEI, he's also a trustee of the conservative Manhattan Institute and a supporter of the conservative *New York Sun*. Called "George Soros's Right-Wing Twin" by *New York* magazine, Kovner has a commitment to neoconservatism that is unsurpassed. His fund is reported to manage much of AEI's investments, and he has been a major donor to the Republican National Committee; in recent years he has sent checks to candidates Rudy Giuliani, John McCain and Joe Lieberman. In 2004 he donated $110,000 to Softer Voices, a conservative group supporting Senator Rick Santorum in what would prove to be a failed 2006 re-election bid, and he sent a quarter of a million dollars last year to All Children Matter, a 527 group that advocates school choice. The group was recently fined a record $5.2 million by the Ohio Elections Committee for illegally transferring money to Republican candidates.

Although Kovner donates to candidates and causes, his real desire is to transform the world through sweeping ideas—the sort of ideas that set the stage for the invasion and occupation of Iraq and that now urge confrontation with Iran. Along with its nation-conquering agenda, AEI is also a voice for an unfettered free market that abhors any sacrifice from the wealthiest among us. Articles in AEI's *American* magazine have titles that seem to be taken from the pages of the *Onion*, such as The Upside of Income Inequality and Why Do We Underpay Our Best CEOs? One AEI scholar, on the op-ed pages of the *Wall Street Journal*, bemoans "the left's 'inequality' obsession."

The "upside" of income inequality is best considered from above: for example, with a view from the fifth floor of Kovner's mansion overlooking Central Park, which he purchased in 1999 from the International Center of Photography for $17.5 million. With the infusion of another $10 million in renovations, the structure—which had contained two floors of gallery space, the museum school and offices—was transformed into his private fortress. In the basement is a rare-book vault, where Kovner presumably keeps copies of an edition of the King James Bible that he financed, with a price tag in excess of $20,000 per volume. Other vantage points from which to assess the benefits of growing income inequality in a clear-eyed fashion might include Kovner's 200-acre estate in Millbrook, New York, or his twelve acres of linked oceanfront properties in Carpinteria, California, which he purchased last year for $70 million in what the *Wall Street Journal* called "among the largest U.S. residential real-estate deals."

For the fortunate like Kovner, being on the winning end of inequality isn't just about flipping through expensive Bibles in a personal book vault or owning a large chunk of the West Coast; it's about the vast political power conferred by wealth, which can be deployed to support institutions pushing policies that, in turn, magnify the wealth divide.

One simple step to mitigate income inequality would be to raise the earnings of workers like Perez and Williams. But as a trustee of the Manhattan Institute, Kovner subsidizes senior fellows like Steven Malanga, who sees something sinister in a living-wage movement that "seeks to force urban firms to pay up to double the minimum wage." The idea that companies would have to pay their workers up to $12 an hour sends Malanga over the edge; he calls the movement a "sneaky way of bringing socialist economics to America's cities." One wonders if Malanga has ever survived on such a puny paycheck; with funding from the superrich like Kovner, it's unlikely.

Over at AEI, labor unions are a target of visiting scholar Richard Vedder. In 2002 he co-wrote a report with Lowell Gallaway that concluded, with the help of a number of confusing charts, that between 1947 and 2000 unions cost the US economy more than $50 trillion in lost income and output.

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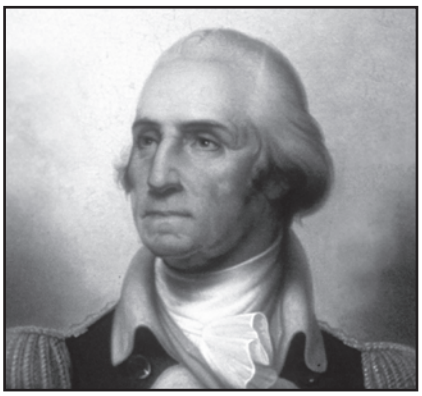
About Your Professor

Dr. Allen C. Guelzo is a prolific author and an award-winning professor at Gettysburg College in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He received his M.A. and Ph.D. in History from the University of Pennsylvania.



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Dr. Guelzo is a member of numerous historical societies, including the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, and the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic. Among his many honors, he holds the Medal of Honor of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In 2005, Dr. Guelzo was nominated by President George W. Bush and confirmed by the Senate as a member of the National Council on the Humanities.

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As an example of how unions damage our economy with their burdensome demands, the authors link the decline of the coal industry not primarily to a shift in other energy sources like oil and gas but to the militancy of the United Mine Workers. Another way to evaluate the worth of the UMW would be to study the number of lives saved through union-won protections, but such calculations hold little interest for Vedder. Vedder is also an enthusiastic cheerleader for Wal-Mart; he penned a book about the virtues of the company and has argued that Wal-Mart is a "force for good" that is "saving America."

The living wage as socialist plot, unions as massive drain on the economy and Wal-Mart as corporate savior: this is the sort of scholarship that Kovner subsidizes. Without squinting too hard, the outlines of such a capitalistic dream world—imagined by well-paid fellows and funded by a billionaire—comes into focus: out from under the thumb of Big Labor, workers are free to work long hours for whatever wages a boss feels like paying. If they fall ill, they're free to visit the emergency room. If they're really sick, they're free to declare bankruptcy. With Wal-Mart as the model, all workers become associates, free from the bonds of health coverage and overtime pay.

GABRIEL THOMPSOWN

Ivan Shelley in front of his workplace, 280 Park Avenue

Like Malanga and Vedder, Ivan Shelley is an expert on low-wage work; that's because, unlike them, he's a low-wage worker. This tends to shape one's perspective. Now 44, Shelley has been a security officer for the Long Island–based firm Pro Quest Security for nearly six years. When he was hired to guard 280 Park Avenue, another large building on Manhattan's East Side, he made $9 an hour; since then, he has received an annual 50-cent raise. "$11.50 an hour shouldn't get me out of bed, but it does," he says ruefully, then cracks a smile. "I've got dogs to feed."

"It's rough, but somebody's got to do it," he says. "At my age, though, it's time to slow down." Shelley's notion of "slowing down" means that he gets off early on Fridays, bringing his workweek down to a mere fifty-seven hours. Like that of most security guards, Shelley's healthcare is "whatever I have in my medicine cabinet."

Shelley is now a leader in the fight to organize security officers in New York City, a campaign directed by the Service Employees International Union's Local 32BJ. "The security officer industry has historically been one of extremely low wages, where companies compete against each other in how little they could pay," says Kevin Doyle, 32BJ's executive vice president. The race to the bottom has left the guards who protect some of the most valuable real estate in Manhattan with a median wage of $10.14 an hour. SEIU is currently targeting office buildings south of Fifty-ninth Street, an area, it says, where 70 percent of the security guards lack a union.

In April 32BJ was able to realize Malanga's worst fears in Washington. After gaining leverage by pushing through a living-wage bill for guards in the District, the union inked a contract with four companies, covering 1,500 security guards. The contract provides workers a minimum wage of $12.40 an hour or, for people already earning that, a 50-cent raise, plus employer-paid healthcare. After a four-year campaign, three-quarters of the District's office security guards have a union.

In May the Center for Economic and Policy Research released a report that found the benefits of union membership were greatest for low-wage workers. Among workers in New York State in the lowest wage bracket, being in a union meant earning a wage 16 percent higher than that of nonunion workers with similar backgrounds. "Too often, people think there's not much we can do to reverse polarization in our economy," says David Dyssegaard Kallick, senior fellow at the Fiscal Policy Institute. "Here's clear evidence that unionization helps: it raises wages for all workers, and it raises them especially among lower-wage workers."

But unions do more than raise wages and provide healthcare. For the working class, unions are one of the few ways to exert economic and political power. People like Kovner can buy power with their individual largesse, which allows them to propagate their views far and wide through political contributions and the support of think tanks. In the past ten years, Kovner has given nearly $500,000 to conservative candidates and PACs, along with an untold amount to AEI, the Manhattan Institute and the *New York Sun*. He's only one citizen, but he shapes the political landscape according to his worldview.

A security officer like Williams might see his life profoundly affected by the efforts of people like Kovner—after all, Williams fought their war in Iraq—but his lone vote just can't compare with the vast network Kovner subsidizes. (And a noncitizen like Perez, the delivery worker, lacks even the power of the ballot.) Belonging to a union like SEIU would connect Williams to a movement that could amplify his concerns; instead of registering his opposition to the war simply by voting for Obama, Williams would join 1.9 million members throwing their organizational muscle behind ending the war, winning national healthcare and supporting sympathetic Congressional candidates. In the 2007–08 election cycle, for example, SEIU was the largest donor to 527s, spending more than $6 million. The union was the top donor to Progressive Majority—a political action committee that works to elect progressive local and state representatives—and has given more than $3.5 million to America Votes, a voter registration and mobilization project focusing on the November election.

"I see the union as a way to get good benefits, a pension and somebody to speak up for me," says Shelley. Even though he works most days from 6 AM to 6 PM, the union drive has added a bounce to his step. He was quoted recently in the New York *Daily News* and did an interview with a prominent radio station. He tells me with a smile that his newfound activism has caused his bosses to pay him visits while at work. One of the owners of Pro Quest, an ex-cop, has tried to discourage work-

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ers at the building from signing union cards with 32BJ. Shelley found this ironic. "I told him, 'You of all people should know how important it is to have a strong union behind you.'"

Despite being one of the richest and most powerful Americans, Kovner maintains a low profile. Like the hedge-fund industry in which he made his money, he wields wide influence but operates mostly below the radar. For tycoons like Kovner, the more that is known about the industry—especially about the compensation of its managers—the more people will wonder why so few earn so much. Indeed, the earnings of hedge-fund and private-equity executives have quietly left regular CEOs in the dust. According to *Executive Excess*, a report published by the Institute for Policy Studies and United for a Fair Economy, the average income in 2006 of the top twenty highest-paid CEOs of publicly held companies was $36 million—impressive, but only 5 percent of the average raked in by the hedge-fund and private-equity executives. That's not the sort of information that executives like to boast about, however, as it seems a bit, well, excessive. Hedge funds turn an axiom on its head: for them, all press is bad press. Most of their websites are bare-bones affairs, a single page with a banal description, frequently not even a phone number to call. Unless you're rich, they don't need you; if you are rich, you already know about them.

Hedge funds are simple structures that engage in extremely complex investments. Essentially, they are nothing more than a group of wealthy individual and institutional investors. Because these rich investors are presumed to know how to handle their money intelligently—and absorb losses—the Securities and Exchange Commission leaves the funds largely unregulated, and the managers are able to guard their investments carefully. They can move money in and out of stocks or commodities rapidly around the globe in response to market trends and fresh analysis. Investing with borrowed money (leverage) is a trademark of hedge funds, allowing for exponential returns on investment.

But with light regulation, nothing keeps a fund from becoming dangerously leveraged—which has implications not just for a fund's investors (which include pension funds) but also for our increasingly integrated economy (the ripples from the implosion of Bear Stearns being the obvious recent example). In September 1998 the sudden collapse of hedge fund Long-Term Capital Management threatened the banking system and led to a bailout by investment banks. The collapse came as such a shock—as a hedge fund, LTCM didn't have to report its shaky investment practices—that it led to a call from politicians for larger hedge funds to report their activities. The move for transparency was defeated, though, and hedge funds remain largely unregulated; Federal Reserve chair Ben Bernanke has insisted that the market will regulate itself.

Private-equity firms are related to hedge funds—both rely on borrowed money—but private-equity funds focus on taking over companies perceived to be underperforming, which they restructure and usually manage for several years and then sell. In the process, the companies typically see their debt load double or triple and often lay off a significant number of workers. The debt-saddled corporations also serve as a tax-avoidance strategy: companies are able to deduct from their taxes the interest on the debt. Last year SEIU launched a private-equity project highlighting the growth of the buyout industry and contrasting the highly compensated private-equity firm managers with the stagnant wages of workers at the companies they own.

The two industries became powerful political actors last year, after a bill was introduced by Representative Sander Levin that proposed closing a loophole in the tax code that allows billionaire fund managers to pay taxes at a lower rate than their secretaries. Private-equity and hedge-fund managers' income arrives through a "two-and-twenty" system—they typically receive a managerial fee of 2 percent of the amount invested, along with a performance fee of 20 percent of the earnings made on the investment, called carried interest.

"Carried interest is no different than giving a bonus to a restaurant manager for being successful," explains Leo Hindery, head of a private-equity company, InterMedia Partners, and the former economic policy adviser to John Edwards. The difference is how carried-interest income is taxed: instead of paying an income tax, which for the wealthy is 35 percent, a manager pays only the 15 percent capital gains tax. In 2006 the loophole allowed Kovner to avoid paying $28.6 million in taxes; last year, it allowed Paulson to pocket an additional $150 million.

Hedge-fund and private-equity firms used lobby muscle to retain a tax loophole that allows them to pay at a lower rate than their secretaries.

The nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation estimated that Levin's bill, which also eliminated the ability of fund managers to shift compensation to offshore havens, would bring in nearly $50 billion to the Treasury within ten years. Edwards, Clinton and Obama all came out in support of the legislation; even *Fortune* magazine concluded it was a sensible proposal. On November 9 it passed the House.

The industry responded aggressively. A primary target was Senator Charles Schumer, who sits on both the Banking and Finance committees and is close to the hedge-fund industry. Checks started flowing in to the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC), which Schumer chairs. Schumer, author of a book whose subtitle is *Winning Back the Middle-Class Majority*, publicly expressed his opposition to the bill, arguing that it unfairly targeted the two industries. In December the Senate overwhelmingly signed a bill leaving the tax loopholes in place.

On the day before the Senate vote, Frederick Iseman, then head of the private-equity arm of Caxton Associates, donated $28,500 to the DSCC. The day after the bill was passed, Paulson wrote the DSCC another $25,000 check. The gifts made up what was a record year for hedge-fund contributions, with individual giving more than doubling to nearly $10 million in the 2007–08 election cycle, according to the Center for Re-

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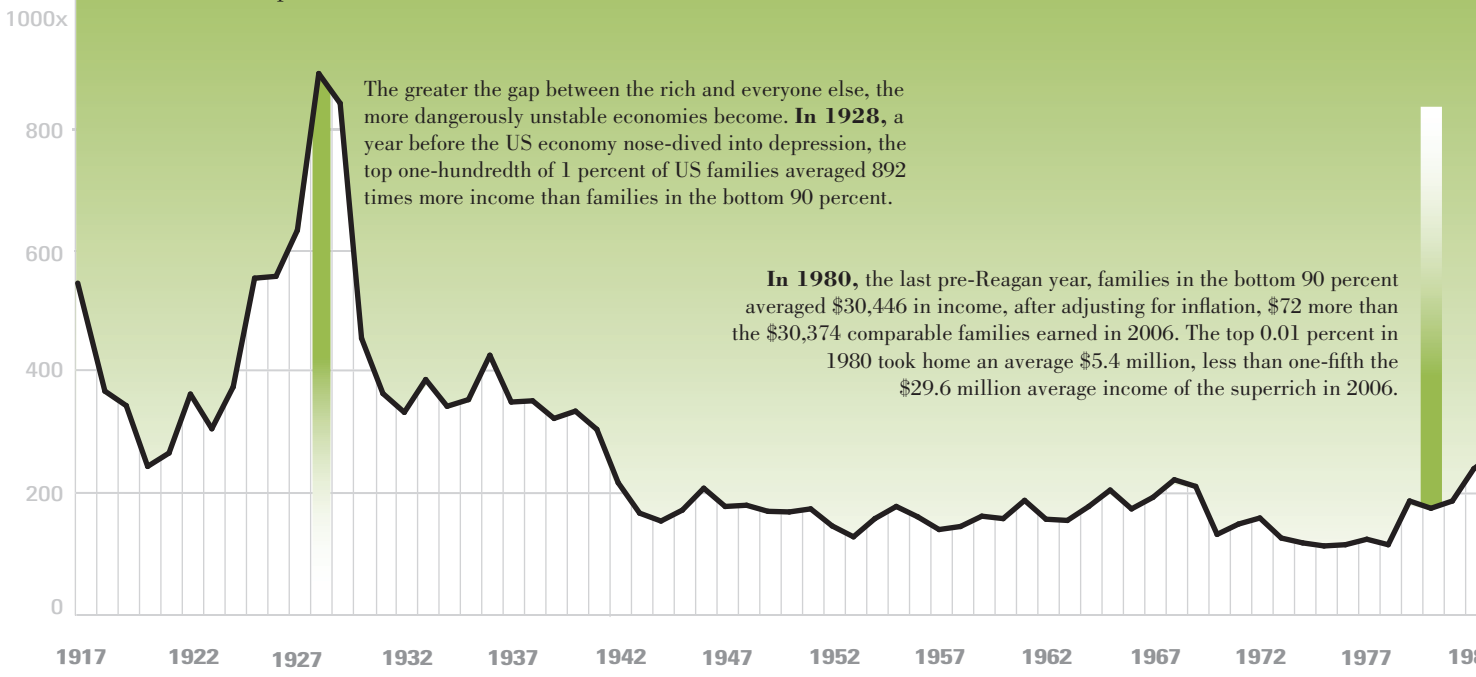
PLUTOCRACY REBORN

A half-century ago, thoughtful Americans considered the Gilded Age ancient history. By the 1950s, robber baron fortunes no longer dominated – or dazzled – America's political and economic landscape. But that's all changed. The awesomely affluent haven't just returned. Today they cast an even greater shadow.

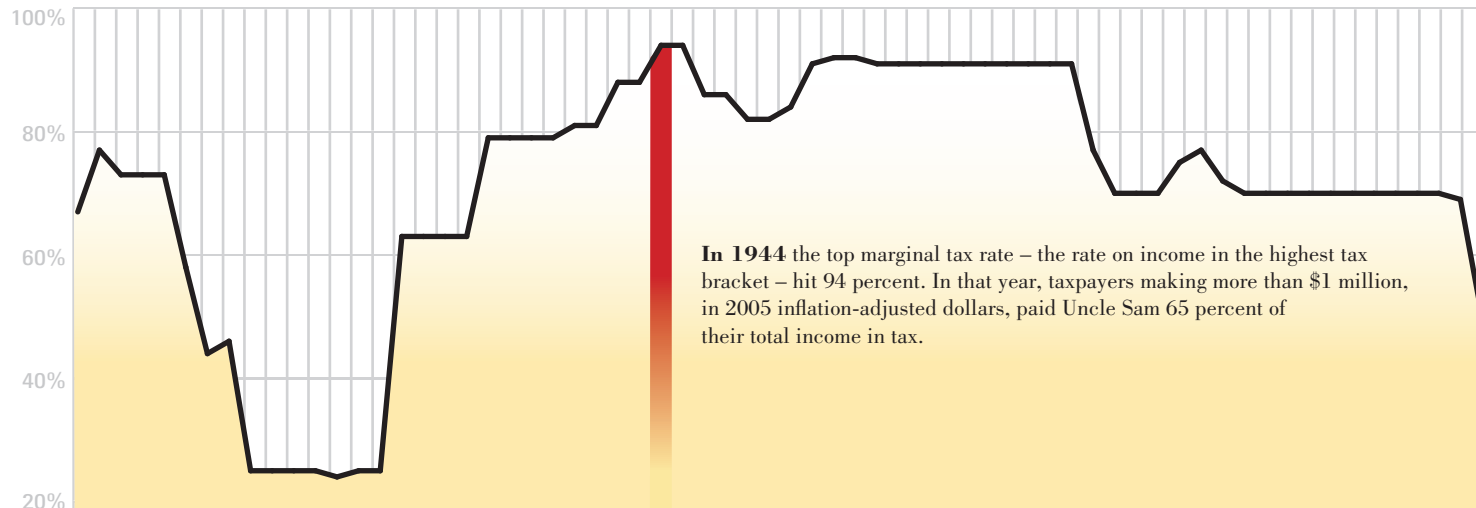
Re-creating the Gap that Gave Us the Great Depression

Average income of top 0.01 percent of US families as a multiple of average income of bottom 90 percent of US families



The greater the gap between the rich and everyone else, the more dangerously unstable economies become. **In 1928,** a year before the US economy nose-dived into depression, the top one-hundredth of 1 percent of US families averaged 892 times more income than families in the bottom 90 percent.

In 1980, the last pre-Reagan year, families in the bottom 90 percent averaged $30,446 in income, after adjusting for inflation, $72 more than the $30,374 comparable families earned in 2006. The top 0.01 percent in 1980 took home an average $5.4 million, less than one-fifth the $29.6 million average income of the superrich in 2006.



In 1944 the top marginal tax rate – the rate on income in the highest tax bracket – hit 94 percent. In that year, taxpayers making more than $1 million, in 2005 inflation-adjusted dollars, paid Uncle Sam 65 percent of their total income in tax.

Our Incredible Shrinking Top Marginal Rate

Federal tax rate on income in highest income bracket

High taxes on the rich, in the mid-20th century, helped keep income from concentrating at America's economic summit. Throughout most of these years, income in the United States over $400,000 a year faced a tax rate just over 90 percent. The current top statutory rate sits at 35 percent.

Sources: A detailed listing of all the sources for these charts appears on The Nation Online at: www.thenation.com/doc/20080630/extreme_inequality

Charts compiled by the **Institute for Policy Studies Program on Inequality and the Common Good.** *Design by Carol Higgs, Worthemore Group; and Kbell Design. Consultation: Dennis Livingston. Research support provided by the Investigative Fund of The Nation Institute.*

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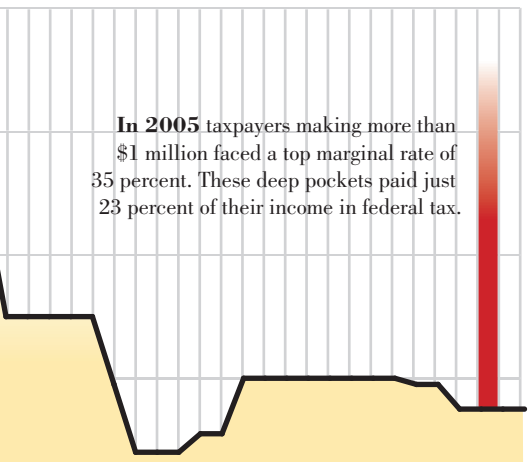
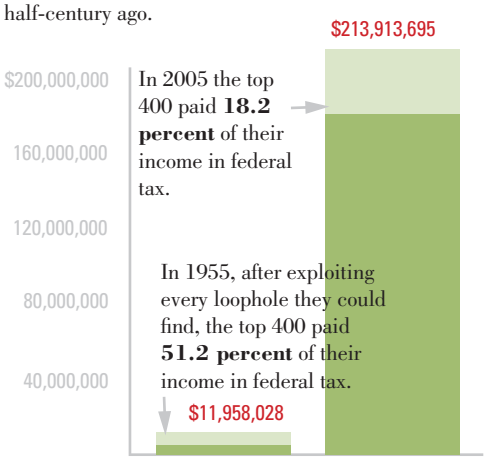

In 2005 taxpayers making more than $1 million faced a top marginal rate of 35 percent. These deep pockets paid just 23 percent of their income in federal tax.

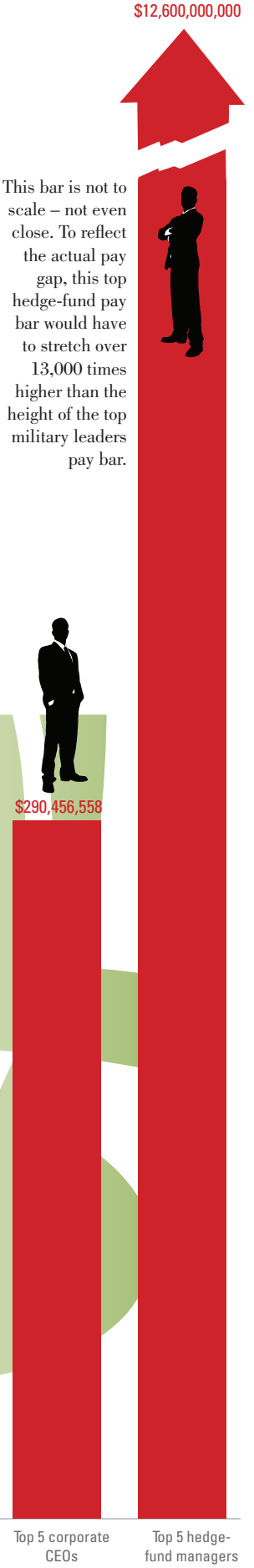
Rates for the estate tax, the only federal levy on inherited wealth, have followed a historical trend line that parallels federal income tax rates. The rate on wealth in the top estate tax bracket hit 77 percent in 1941 and remained at that level through 1976. The current top estate tax rate: 45 percent.

Good Times at the Tippy-Top

Top 400 average income, in 2005 $

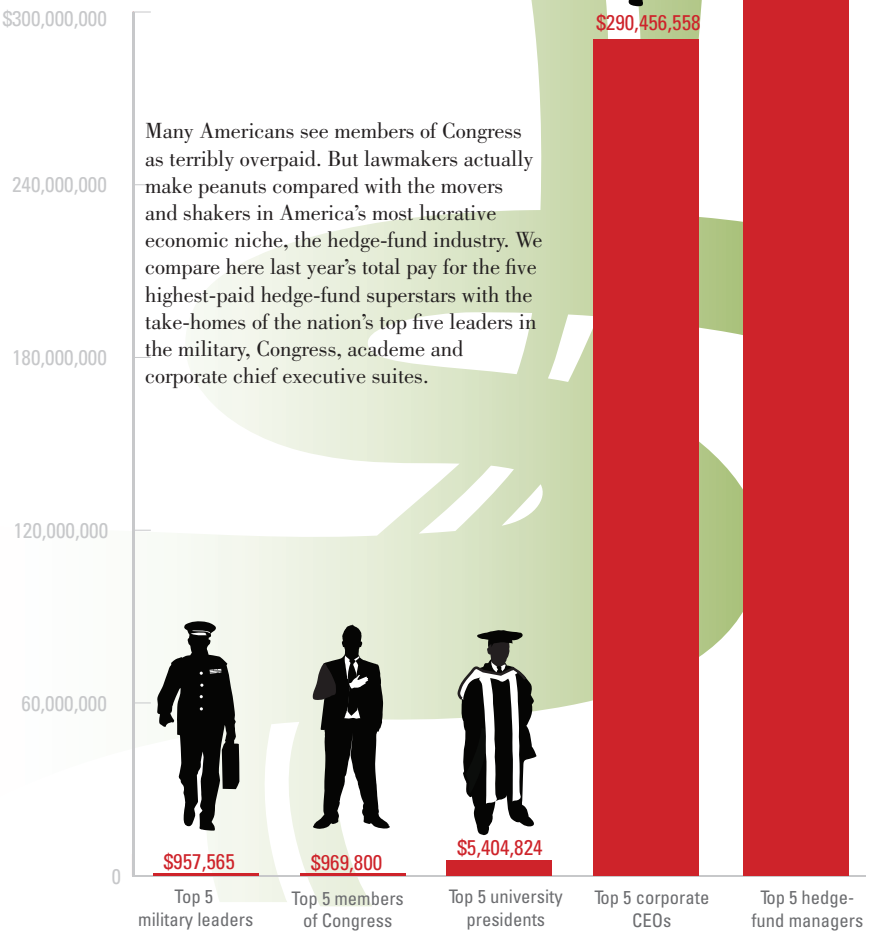
America's 400 highest-earning taxpayers in 2005 collected, after adjusting for inflation, 18 times more income than their counterparts in 1955, a half-century ago.


$213,913,695
$200,000,000
160,000,000
120,000,000
80,000,000
40,000,000
In 2005 the top 400 paid **18.2 percent** of their income in federal tax.
In 1955, after exploiting every loophole they could find, the top 400 paid **51.2 percent** of their income in federal tax.
$11,958,028


$12,600,000,000
This bar is not to scale – not even close. To reflect the actual pay gap, this top hedge-fund pay bar would have to stretch over 13,000 times higher than the height of the top military leaders pay bar.

Fab Fives: How Do Our Leadership Superstars Match Up?

Total annual compensation


$300,000,000
240,000,000
180,000,000
120,000,000
60,000,000
0
Many Americans see members of Congress as terribly overpaid. But lawmakers actually make peanuts compared with the movers and shakers in America's most lucrative economic niche, the hedge-fund industry. We compare here last year's total pay for the five highest-paid hedge-fund superstars with the take-homes of the nation's top five leaders in the military, Congress, academe and corporate chief executive suites.
$957,565
$969,800
$5,404,824
$290,456,558
Top 5 military leaders
Top 5 members of Congress
Top 5 university presidents
Top 5 corporate CEOs
Top 5 hedge-fund managers

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sponsive Politics. About three-quarters of those donations went to Democrats. Private-equity lobbying also had a watershed year, with spending rising from $740,000 in 2006 to $10 million in 2007, according to *Congressional Quarterly*.

The giving patterns at Paulson & Company illustrate the newfound political muscle of the industries. During the 2005–06 election cycle, only one employee of the company made a donation, giving $1,500 to the Women's Campaign Fund. The 2007–08 cycle, which covers the period when legislation was introduced to close the loopholes, finds employees making more than seventy donations, totaling more than $200,000. These included $105,000 to the DSCC; $20,700 to Max Baucus, chair of the Senate Finance Committee; $19,400 to Richard Durbin, chair of the Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government; and $8,000 to the Managed Funds Association, the industry's PAC.

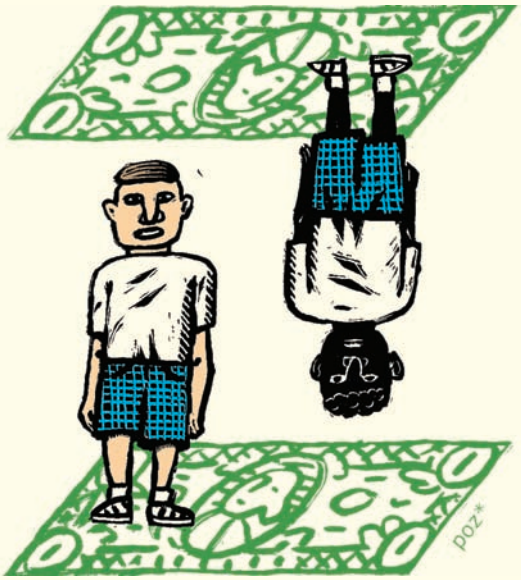
Hindery supports closing the tax loopholes (he tells me some of his peers in the private-equity industry have called him a trai-

Race and Extreme Inequality

by DEDRICK MUHAMMAD

The current presidential campaign has sparked a lot of conversation about race, but it has primarily been at the symbolic and interpersonal level. It has failed to probe the underlying substance of racial economic disparities and the slow rate of progress toward equity in wealth and wages. Too many Americans naïvely see the strong presidential candidacy of Illinois Senator Barack Obama as evidence of the resolution of the racial divide.

Since 1968, the year Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated, the income gap between blacks and whites has narrowed by just three cents on the dollar. In 2005 the median per capita income in the United States stood at $16,629 for blacks and $28,946 for whites. At this slow rate of progress, we will not achieve income equality for 537 years. And if politicians continue to dismantle government checks on income and wealth concentration, even these modest gains may be reversed.



PETER O. ZIERLEIN

Extreme inequality in the overall economy exacerbates income and wealth disparities between whites and people of color. These disparities remain shockingly wide and especially evident when we examine the polarization of assets and wealth in the United States. The black homeownership rate, for instance, sits at 47 percent and the Latino rate at 49.7 percent, compared with 75 percent for whites.

African-American families in the United States have a median net worth of $20,600, only 14.6 percent of the $140,700 median white net worth. The median net worth for Latino families is $18,600, only 13.2 percent of median white net worth. Between 1983 and 2004, the most recent year for which official federal data are available, median black and Latino wealth inched up from 7 percent to 10 percent of median white wealth. At this rate, we will not achieve wealth equality for 634 years.

Even more disturbing, the tiny wealth gains of recent decades are evaporating as the subprime mortgage meltdown continues to spread. According to Home Mortgage Disclosure Act data, blacks are three times as likely as whites to have received a subprime loan and four times as likely to have refinanced from a subprime lender. Figures for Latinos are just as depressing. According to the Center for Responsible Lending, Latinos will lose between $75 billion and $98 billion in home-value wealth from subprime loans. Blacks will lose between $71 billion and $92 billion. United for a Fair Economy has called this family net-worth catastrophe the "greatest loss of wealth for people of color in modern U.S. history."

The subprime fiasco is rippling through communities of color like miniature Hurricane Katrinas. And we are witnessing only the beginning of the impact: foreclosure, displacement, family upheaval, the devaluation of entire neighborhoods, eroding local tax bases, the decline of local services.

Our nation needs to make a dramatic reinvestment in broadening wealth and opportunity—for all Americans. In the decades after FDR's New Deal, such investments—including low-interest home-buyer loans, grants for college education and small-business subsidies—helped tens of millions of families enter the middle class. But these wealth-building programs directly or indirectly excluded people of color. They thus bolstered the economic supremacy of whites, continuing the American legacy of racist inequality.

Since the end of legal segregation and discrimination, we have not seen comparable government investment programs that could benefit people of color. We urgently need such programs, including matching savings plans to build assets and purchase homes. We can afford them—but only if we stop investing America's resources in the wealthiest people, leaving the rest of Americans to survive on a trickle.

Dedrick Muhammad, senior organizer and researcher at the Institute for Policy Studies, is the author of Forty Years Later: The Unrealized American Dream, *an April IPS report, and co-author of* State of the Dream 2008 *from United for a Fair Economy.*

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tor for taking this stance), and he's been frustrated by the ability of industry lobbyists to decisively influence Congress. Still, he holds out hope that in "a country that's nearly broke" and suffering from "pervasive income inequality," the loopholes benefiting the richest Americans can't be ignored forever.

At a House hearing on the bill, Bruce Rosenblum, managing director of the Carlyle Group and chair of the Private Equity Council, the industry's new lobby group, argued that the risks taken by fund managers are "significant." Primarily, they "forgo other opportunities that provide greater security and guaranteed returns in exchange for the greater upside potential." In other words, for the risk of forgoing the chance to earn lots of money in investment banking in order to potentially earn even more money in private equity, firm managers deserve to be taxed at lower rates than your average teacher or janitor. Perhaps sensing that this argument wasn't persuasive enough, Rosenblum went on to highlight the other "assets" that managers stand to lose if their funds perform poorly, namely "good will, business relationships and reputations."

The brave risk-takers of the hedge-fund and private-equity worlds are on my mind as I listen to Timothy Williams, the security guard who protects John Paulson, describe his tour of duty in Iraq. Much of the time was spent in Anbar province, conducting raids and patrols and manning traffic checkpoints. His battalion lost nine soldiers, but it could have been worse.

"During one patrol I saw my lieutenant's Humvee get hit with an IED right next to us," Williams recounts. "The Humvee was completely destroyed, but somehow everyone survived. In Iraq, things are always exploding. The first week I was nervous all the time, but you get used to it. My mom, though, never wanted me to sign up."

Williams, uninsured and working for a nonunion company, sees taking these risks as his only means to a stable career. That's why, despite his opposition to the war, he signed up for a six-year term with the National Guard. "After that," he says, "I only need ten more years to retire." Meanwhile, Kovner, who never served in the military, is chair of a think tank that aggressively pushed the United States to invade Iraq and is now fighting (from desks in air-conditioned offices) to maintain troop levels until "late 2009," in the words of AEI resident scholar Frederick Kagan. Domestically, Kovner funds groups that rail against the living wage and unions alike, curtailing the chances for working people like Williams ever to earn a decent living as civilians. Kovner's daughter hasn't ever faced such a choice; her path eased by her father's connections, she worked as a reporter for the paper he funds, the *Sun*, and now clerks for conservative Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia.

For Williams, higher wages and generous benefits can't be found guarding buildings in Manhattan, and without union organizing, the security guard industry will continue to be made up of the working poor. And when jobs like these—which have replaced the unionized, decently compensated blue-collar jobs of old—remain union-free, with stagnating wages, the military can become the best option for advancement. Someone needs to provide the "vigilant and effective defense" that is AEI's mission, after all, and it certainly isn't going to be the children of people like Kovner. ■

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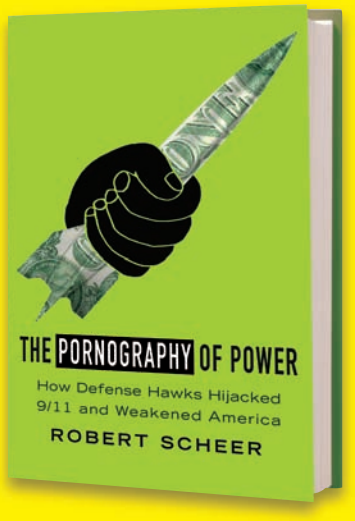

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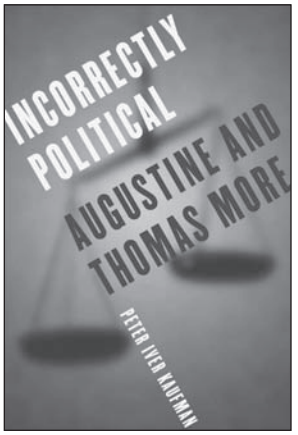

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This Land Is Their Land

A general rule for today: if a place is truly beautiful, you can't afford to be there.

by BARBARA EHRENREICH

I took a little vacation recently—nine hours in Sun Valley, Idaho, before an evening speaking engagement. The sky was deep blue, the air crystalline, the hills green and not yet on fire. Strolling out of the Sun Valley Lodge, I found a tiny tourist village, complete with Swiss-style bakery, multistar restaurant and "opera house." What luck—the boutiques were displaying outdoor racks of summer clothing on sale! Nature and commerce were conspiring to make this the perfect micro-vacation.

But as I approached the stores things started to get a little sinister—maybe I had wandered into a movie set or Paris Hilton's closet?—because even at a 60 percent discount, I couldn't find a sleeveless cotton shirt for less than $100. These items shouldn't have been outdoors; they should have been in locked glass cases.

Then I remembered the general rule, which has been in effect since sometime in the 1990s: if a place is truly beautiful, you can't afford to be there. All right, I'm sure there are still exceptions—a few scenic spots not yet eaten up by mansions. But they're going fast.

About ten years ago, for example, a friend and I rented a snug, inexpensive one-bedroom house in Driggs, Idaho, just over the Teton Range from wealthy Jackson Hole, Wyoming. At that time, Driggs was where the workers lived, driving over the Teton Pass every day to wait tables and make beds on the stylish side of the mountains. The point is, we low-rent folks got to wake up to the same scenery the rich people enjoyed and hike along the same pine-shadowed trails.

But the money was already starting to pour into Driggs—Paul Allen of Microsoft, August Busch III of Anheuser-Busch, Harrison Ford—transforming family potato farms into vast dynastic estates. I haven't been back, but I understand Driggs has become another unaffordable Jackson Hole. Where the wait staff and bed-makers live today I do not know.

I witnessed this kind of deterioration up close in Key West, Florida, where I first went in 1986, attracted not only by the turquoise waters and frangipani-scented nights but by the fluid, egalitarian social scene. At a typical party you might find literary stars like Alison Lurie, Annie Dillard and Robert Stone, along with commercial fishermen, waitresses and men who risked their lives diving for treasure (once a major blue-collar occupation). Then, at some point in the '90s, the rich started pouring in. You'd see them on the small planes coming down from Miami—taut-skinned, linen-clad and impatient. They drove house prices into the seven-figure range. They encouraged restaurants to charge upward of $30 for an entree. They tore down working-class tiki bars to make room for their waterfront "condotels."

This essay is adapted from Barbara Ehrenreich's latest book, This Land Is Their Land: Notes from a Divided Nation *(Metropolitan).*

PETER O. ZIERLEIN

Of all the crimes of the rich, the aesthetic deprivation of the rest of us may seem to be the merest misdemeanor. Many of them owe their wealth to the usual tricks: squeezing their employees, overcharging their customers and polluting any land they're not going to need for their third or fourth homes. Once they've made (or inherited) their fortunes, the rich can bid up the price of goods that ordinary people also need—housing, for example. Gentrification is dispersing the urban poor into overcrowded suburban ranch houses, while billionaires' horse farms displace rural Americans into trailer homes. Similarly, the rich can easily fork over annual tuitions of $50,000 and up, which has helped make college education a privilege of the upper classes.

There are other ways, too, that the rich are robbing the rest of us of beauty and pleasure. As the bleachers in stadiums and arenas are cleared to make way for skybox "suites" costing more than $100,000 for a season, going out to a ballgame has become prohibitively expensive for the average family. At the other end of the cultural spectrum, superrich collectors have driven up the price of artworks, leading museums to charge ever rising prices for admission.

It shouldn't be a surprise that the Pew Research Center finds happiness to be unequally distributed, with 50 percent of people earning more than $150,000 a year describing themselves as "very happy," compared with only 23 percent of those earning less than $20,000. When nations are compared, inequality itself seems to reduce well-being, with some of the most equal nations—Iceland and Norway—ranking highest, according to the UN's Human Development Index. We are used to thinking that poverty is a "social problem" and wealth is only something

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to celebrate, but extreme wealth is also a social problem, and the superrich have become a burden on everyone else.

If Edward O. Wilson is right about "biophilia"—an innate human need to interact with nature—there may even be serious mental health consequences to letting the rich hog all the good scenery. I know that if I don't get to see vast expanses of water, 360-degree horizons and mountains piercing the sky for at least a week or two of the year, chronic, cumulative claustrophobia sets in. According to evolutionary psychologist Nancy Etcoff, the need for scenery is hard-wired into us. "People like to be on a hill, where they can see a landscape. And they like somewhere to go where they can *not* be seen themselves," she told *Harvard Magazine* last year. "That's a place desirable to a predator who wants to avoid becoming prey." We also like to be able to see water (for drinking), low-canopy trees (for shade) and animals (whose presence signals that a place is habitable).

Ultimately, the plutocratic takeover of rural America has a downside for the wealthy too. The more expensive a resort town gets, the farther its workers have to commute to keep it functioning. And if your heart doesn't bleed for the dishwasher or landscaper who commutes two to four hours a day, at least shed a tear for the wealthy vacationer who gets stuck in the ensuing traffic. It's bumper to bumper westbound out of Telluride, Colorado, every day at 5, or eastbound on Route 1 out of Key West, for the Lexuses as well as the beat-up old pickup trucks.

Or a place may simply run out of workers. Monroe County, which includes Key West, has seen more than 2,000 workers leave since the 2000 Census, a loss the *Los Angeles Times* calls "a body blow to the service-oriented economy of a county with only 75,000 residents and 2.25 million overnight visitors a year." Among those driven out by rents of more than $1,600 for a one-bedroom apartment are many of Key West's wait staff, hotel housekeepers, gardeners, plumbers and handymen. No matter how much money you have, everything takes longer—from getting a toilet fixed to getting a fish sandwich at Pepe's.

Then there's the elusive element of charm, which quickly drains away in a uniform population of multimillionaires. The Hamptons had their fishermen. Key West still advertises its "characters"—sun-bleached, weather-beaten misfits who drifted down for the weather or to escape some difficult situation on the mainland. But the fishermen are long gone from the Hamptons and disappearing from Cape Cod. As for Key West's characters—with the traditional little conch houses once favored by shrimpers flipped into million-dollar second homes, these human sources of local color have to be prepared to sleep with the scorpions under the highway overpass.

In Telluride even a local developer is complaining about the lack of affordable housing. "To have a real town," he told the *Financial Times*, "Telluride needs some locals hanging out"—in old-fashioned diners, for example, where you don't have to speak Italian to order a cup of coffee.

When I was a child, I sang "America the Beautiful" and meant it. I was born in the Rocky Mountains and raised, at various times, on the coasts. The Big Sky, the rolling surf, the jagged, snowcapped mountains—all this seemed to be my birthright. But now I flinch when I hear Woody Guthrie's line "This land was made for you and me." Somehow, I don't think it was meant to be sung by a chorus of hedge-fund operators. ■

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Ending Plutocracy: A 12-Step Program

Our forebears battled a superrich class even more entrenched than this one. Now it's our turn.

by SARAH ANDERSON AND SAM PIZZIGATI

America's first Gilded Age didn't merely end. Progressives had to fight to end it. Our forebears did battle, decade after decade, for proposals that dared to "soak the rich."

How quaint that phrase now seems. Progressives today do talk about making the superrich pay their "fair tax share"; but we no longer dare imagine an America without the superrich. We have become addicted to a politics that ignores the power of the fabulously wealthy to define—and distort—our nation's political agenda.

How can we end this addiction? In the twelve-step spirit of dependency-busters everywhere, we offer a dozen policy approaches that can help slice America's superwealthy down to democratic size. To help us rebuild our plutocracy-busting self-confidence, we begin with the somewhat more winnable.

STEP 1: Admit we are powerless unless we learn more about how concentrated our nation's wealth has become.

In 1907 Joseph Pulitzer ended his publishing career with a farewell that urged readers to forever beware "predatory plutocracy." He had started that career, years earlier, exposing wealthy tax dodgers. Disclosure has been a prime weapon in the progressive arsenal ever since.

§ Require government contractors to reveal how much their executives make. The Securities and Exchange Commission requires publicly traded companies to reveal how much their top five executives are making. But privately held companies face no such mandate, and the CEO of private security giant Blackwater last fall refused to divulge how much he has pocketed from his company's contracts in Iraq. A bill now before Congress, the Government Contractor Accountability Act, would force companies like Blackwater to disclose their top executive pay.

§ Require corporations to report CEO–worker pay gaps. CEOs now take in, as a share of corporate earnings, twice as much as they walked off with just a decade ago. The labor share of national income, meanwhile, has shrunk to record lows. Which companies are shoving the most cash up the corporate flowchart? If corporations were required to document annually the gap between their highest- and lowest-paid employees, we would know.

§ Require the superrich to make their tax returns public. In 1934 early New Dealers enacted legislation that made the incomes of wealthy people—and the taxes they pay—a matter of public record. But the superrich quickly launched a fervid PR campaign that attacked the statute as an open invitation to kidnappers. In an America still reeling from the infamous Lindbergh baby snatching, that claim gave lawmakers a convenient cover for repealing this tax sunshine mandate. In 2005 America's top-earning 400 paid a paltry 18.2 percent of their income in federal tax. It's time to let the sunshine back in.

STEP 2: Trust in a power greater than CEOs and their buddies.

The top one-hundredth of 1 percent of America's taxpayers have seen their collective income quadruple, after inflation, over the past two decades. Corporate executives account for about a fifth of that income. How have CEOs engineered their awesome take-homes? They essentially pay themselves. They sit on one another's corporate boards and rubber-stamp executive pay plans that come from consultants who know where their bread is buttered. Democratizing corporate governance could help end this enabling.

§ Give shareholders a "say on pay." The House of Representatives voted last year to give shareholders the right to vote on executive compensation. But these votes would be advisory only, and such nonbinding votes—in Britain, for instance—haven't done much to break executive pay spirals. Still, the prospect of shareholder no votes could dampen the willingness of corporate boards to keep signing blank checks. The Senate has so far stalled on "say on pay."

§ End Kremlin-style corporate board elections. To really rein in CEO pay, shareholders need more than an advisory say on pay. They need a say on who sits on corporate boards. Corporate board elections currently sport all the democratic trimmings of Leonid Brezhnev's Supreme Soviet, complete with fixed slates. In 2003 the SEC proposed giving shareholders a halfway meaningful right to vote for alternative candidates. But fierce opposition from the Business Roundtable, the nation's leading CEO club, *nyet*ed this attempt at corporate *perestroika*.

§ Give all stakeholders a real corporate voice. Shareholders, suitably empowered, could help check executive excess. But workers and their communities have just as much stake in CEO pay decisions as shareholders—because over-the-top pay plans give CEOs an incentive to pump up short-term bottom lines at the expense of long-haul enterprise success. Mandating worker and community representation on corporate boards could institutionalize a voice for all corporate stakeholders.

STEP 3: Don't let the tax code enable executive excess.

Corporate boards don't deserve all the blame for excessive executive compensation. Lawmakers have been enablers, too. They've littered the tax code with provisions that encourage outsized rewards at the top of the corporate ladder. Progressives ought to be launching an "anti-littering" campaign.

§ Eliminate stock-option accounting sleight-of-hand. Corporations can legally claim tax deductions for executive stock options that run up to ten times higher than the cost of these options that corporations record in their annual financial state-

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ments. In 2005, just-released IRS figures show, the gap between what executive options cost corporations and what corporations deducted from their taxes for these options hit $61 billion. Senator Carl Levin has introduced legislation that would shut this loophole and raise billions annually in new tax revenue.

§ End bankruptcy bonanzas. In 2005 Congress banned companies in bankruptcy proceedings from giving executives retention and severance bonuses that run over ten times the bonus that workers receive. But the law doesn't limit "performance-based" bonuses, and corporations are sailing through this loophole. Calpine, a California energy company, exited bankruptcy last winter with a workforce cut by nearly a third. The company's CEO exited with a $10.9 million bonus.

§ Cap tax-free "deferred pay." Of *Fortune*'s top 1,000 US companies, 90 percent have set up deferred-pay accounts to let top executives shield unlimited amounts of compensation from taxes. Target CEO Robert Ulrich, for example, held $133.5 million in his deferred-pay account at the end of 2006. By contrast, the cubicle crowd faces strict limits on how much income can be deferred via 401(k) plans—$15,500 is the max for most workers. Corporate lobbyists last year squashed a Senate effort that would have placed a modest $1 million cap on executive pay deferrals.

STEP 4: Insist on a searching IRS inventory of super-wealthy wallets.

Today's IRS agents, OMB Watch reported earlier this year, are actually spending more time auditing poor taxpayers than rich ones. Progressives ought to be demanding an IRS that zeroes in on the awesomely affluent.

§ Shut down offshore income hideaways. A University of Michigan study estimates that the superrich are dodging as much as $50 billion per year in federal taxes by stashing income overseas. Arbitrary time limits on IRS investigations help make recovering these lost billions next to impossible.

§ End charitable giveaway scams. Wealthy Americans are routinely overvaluing the artwork they donate to museums—and the IRS remains too understaffed to stop them. America's rich, overall, claim about $1 billion a year in tax write-offs for donated artwork. Let's stop subsidizing art museum vanity wings.

§ Put the kibosh on wealth warehousing at elite alma maters. Superrich alums are saving beaucoup bucks in taxes by pouring enormous wealth into elite private universities. Harvard's endowment last year hit $34.6 billion—at a time when public colleges are cutting programs and hiking tuitions. Elite endowments pay a mere 2 percent excise tax on their investment earnings. They should pay at twice that rate—and even higher if they don't spend, on education, at least 5 percent of their endowment value a year.

STEP 5: Clamp down on hedge-fund kingpins.

Last year fifty hedge-fund managers took home more than $210 million each. Perhaps even more amazing: hedge-fund office receptionists pay more of their incomes in taxes than their bosses. How is that possible? A good bit of hedge-fund-manager income comes as a cut of the profits the funds generate. Our financial royals can claim this cut as a capital gain, a neat maneuver that chops their tax rate from 35 to 15 percent. Last year an attempt to shut this hedge- and private-equity-fund loophole died in the Senate.

STEP 6: Make amends to those who truly earn their income.

We could skip Step 5 if we simply taxed "earned income"—the money people make from actual labor—at the same rate as the "unearned income" that comes from sitting back and letting money do all the heavy lifting. America's richest regularly realize vast amounts of this unearned income, mostly through dividends and capital gains from trading stocks, bonds and other forms of property. On these unearned billions, they pay taxes at a 15 percent rate, less than half the 35 percent top rate on ordinary earned income.

STEP 7: Treat outsized pay as a defect of corporate character.

Our tax law lets corporations claim reasonable business expenses as tax deductions. But what's reasonable? Corporations can deduct as "reasonable" whatever they shell out in excessive executive pay, so long as they label that excess a reward for "performance." Representative Barbara Lee's Income Equity Act, a bill introduced last year, would cap the executive pay that corporations can deduct at twenty-five times the pay of a company's lowest-paid workers. State senators Paul Pinsky and Richard Madaleno have introduced similar legislation in Maryland.

STEP 8: Awake to the simplicity of tax surcharges.

Debating the ins and outs of the tax code can take time. In the past, progressives used a shortcut to hike taxes on the financially fortunate: the surcharge, a simple add-on to the tax owed under existing law. Last year Representative Charlie Rangel proposed a 4 percent surtax on couples' income over $200,000 and a 4.6 percent surcharge on income over $500,000, hikes that would raise $832 billion over ten years. Commentator Nicholas von Hoffman has urged a somewhat edgier surcharge, a special "Victory Over Terror" levy that would subject incomes over $5 million to a 20 percent extra charge that would expire only "when the war on terror is won or declared over."

STEP 9: Seek a more progressive reckoning with the dearly departed.

In 2001 the first Bush tax cut included a phaseout of the estate tax, our nation's only levy on inherited wealth. But after 2010, unless Congress acts, the estate tax on America's largest bequests will revert to pre-W levels. Estate tax foes, to prevent that, want estate tax rates slashed to mere nuisance status. If they succeed, the last three decades of excess in corporate America will turn into a skyscraper-high foundation for a new aristocracy that would have the wealth—and power—to frustrate progressive social change for generations to come. Representative Jim McDermott has a better idea. He's promoting legislation that would place a 55 percent estate tax on fortunes greater than $10 million.

STEP 10: Restore sanity to the taxation of wealth.

Typical American families have little net worth outside the value of their homes. The superwealthy, even those with multiple mansions, hold the vast bulk of their wealth in financial investments. Normal property taxes leave this financial wealth untaxed. The result: average Americans pay a tax on their wealth; rich Americans don't. About a dozen European nations sidestep this double standard by levying a small annual tax on

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all wealth holdings. In the United States, economist Edward Wolff has calculated, a wealth tax that exempted the first $250,000 of household wealth, then imposed a graduated rate that topped off at 0.8 percent on fortunes over $5 million, would raise about $60 billion a year.

STEP 11: Leverage the power of the public purse.

Our tax dollars, by law, do not go to companies that increase racial or gender inequality. We deny government contracts to firms that discriminate, in their employment practices, by race or gender. So why should we let our tax dollars go to firms that increase *economic* inequality? Hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars are flowing annually to companies that pay their CEOs more for a day's work than their workers make in a year.

One antidote: we could deny federal contracts or subsidies to companies that pay their top executives more than twenty-five times what their lowest-paid workers receive. One bill pending in Congress, the Patriot Corporations of America Act, steps in this direction. The bill would extend tax breaks and federal contracting preferences to companies that meet benchmarks for good corporate behavior. Among the benchmarks: not compensating any executive at more than "10,000 percent"—100 times—the income of the company's lowest-paid full-timer.

STEP 12: Admit to ourselves that maybe Ike had it right.

In Eisenhower's America income over $400,000—the equivalent of less than $3 million today—faced a top marginal tax rate of 91 percent. Our current top rate: 35 percent. In 2004, after exploiting loopholes, taxpayers who took home more than $5 million paid an average 21.9 percent of their incomes in federal tax. In 1954 the federal tax bite on taxpayers with comparable incomes averaged 54.5 percent.

How much revenue could be raised by a significant tax hike on America's highest incomes? If the top rate was raised to 50 percent on all income between $5 million and $10 million and 70 percent on income above $10 million, federal revenues would jump $105 billion—and the nation's richest 0.1 percent would still be paying less in taxes than they did under Ike.

A century ago, progressives never actually agreed on any one set of proposals to end rule by the rich. They vigorously—and constantly—debated competing proposals. That debate needs restarting. We hope this list helps.

We also need to recognize that blueprints for social change don't go anywhere without social changers, without organized pressure from below. In America's first great triumph over plutocracy, that pressure came mainly from a resurgent labor movement. To repeat that success, labor once again needs to be surging, one big reason initiatives that aim to help unions organize—like the Employee Free Choice Act campaign—have a key role to play in any plutocracy-busting offensive.

Can such an offensive succeed? Why not? Our forebears faced a plutocracy more entrenched than ours. They beat that plutocracy back. Our turn. ■

Letters

(continued from page 2)

than 50 percent of the final round tally, but only 75 of 150 winners received an initial majority of first choices. The rest had to earn the second choice preferences of backers of other candidates.

The Greens contested every seat and won 8 percent of the national vote—about three times what Ralph Nader won in 2000. If results had been based on first choices, the Greens would have "spoiled" numerous Labor victories. Similarly, Mary Robinson vaulted into first place in an IRV election to become Ireland's first woman president.

IRV is reform that works and has momentum, highlighted by support from likely presidential nominees Barack Obama and John McCain—and savvy students of politics like Katrina vanden Heuvel and *The New Yorker*'s Hendrik Hertzberg.

Our website presents information on majority voting, proportional representation, a national popular vote for President, a constitutional right to vote and universal voter registration. I urge readers to visit fairvote.org and join us in bringing our democracy into the twenty-first century.

Rob Richie
Executive director, FairVote

Baker Replies

Abu Dhabi

Rob Richie and many other energetic IRV defenders have slightly misread me. In no part of my piece was I out to discredit IRV (much less make the case for range voting). Instead, I hoped to express my dissatisfaction with the way FairVote sometimes goes about defending its positions, particularly on its website and particularly on the subject of the monotonicity criterion. I think my objection was clear and that Richie recognized the problem; hence the recent launch of fairvote.org/monotonicity.

Richie (who has done more for voting reform in the last week than I will in my entire life) has also been kind enough to send me some very cordial e-mails. He is genuinely concerned that I approach the issue of voting system reform with what he takes to be the most current and relevant information possible. I hope that, despite Richie's puzzling avowed desire to steer clear of debate among reformers, this concern will find a home on FairVote's website as it continues to grow. The first article posted is a good start, though I disagree with many of its suggestions (there is not nearly enough space for this debate here), and I wish it was easier to stumble on from their main site.

In this letter, however, Richie mostly argues against a straw man. I did not argue (and no one argues) that every IRV election will automatically result in some terrible outcome, or that IRV cannot elect likable liberals. Thus, sunny-sounding reports from Australia and Ireland do not prove me or other IRV skeptics wrong, nor do they prove IRV's superiority to range voting or other voting systems.

Finally, it bears noting that the lack of detailed data from most IRV elections (including Australia's) often makes it difficult or impossible to analyze the results for subtle but significant pathologies. The reform movement would be well served by the release of this information.

Peter C. Baker

Correction

Because of a miscommunication, a month was given instead of a year in Jacqueline Stevens's "Thin ICE" in last week's issue. The third sentence of the article should have read, "In 2007 alone, 276,912 US residents were deported."

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Books & the Arts.

TOMAS MUNITA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

A family of Pashtun nomadic pastoralists south of Kabul, Afghanistan, 2005

The Long Life of the Frontier Mullah

by BASHARAT PEER

Late one evening in March, I sat in Haandi, a Pakistani restaurant on Lexington Avenue, and watched the swearing in of the new Prime Minister of Pakistan, Yousaf Raza Gillani. Gillani is a loyalist of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), which since its founding in 1967 has been led by the Bhutto clan. The general election in February was held seven weeks after the PPP's chair, Benazir Bhutto, was killed by a bomb blast and a bullet to the head at an election rally in Rawalpindi, and in an acrid climate of grief, anger and bewilderment, the PPP ended up trouncing President Pervez Musharraf's Pakistan Muslim League. A television suspended from the ceiling at Haandi showed Pakistan's new prime minister discussing the restoration of democratic institutions and then announcing the release of the sixty-two judges, including Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, who had been living under house arrest since President Musharraf imposed martial law on November 3. Soon after Gillani's announcement, the television showed Chaudhry on the balcony of his house in Islamabad, Pakistan's capital. Crowds of supporters danced about and showered him with rose petals.

The news anchor then claimed a scoop, as one of the network's reporters thrust a cellphone into Chaudhry's face. The chief justice spoke into it, and his words reached me and the dozen or so Pakistani cabdrivers staring at a television in a restaurant in New York City. "There is still a long struggle ahead of us," he said. Three men at my table broke into a spontaneous discussion. The newscast's images of reform and hope reminded them of their country's failures: a feudal social system, the rule of the landlords, nearly four decades of military rule, widespread inequality. These were men who worked twelve-hour shifts in their rented cabs and had for years lived apart from their families in Pakistan, to whom they regularly remitted their meager savings. One man talked about the tragedy of the partition of British India into India and Pakistan. Another compared prepartition India to a neighborhood: the country had been a cluster of houses owned by people who were related, often sons of the same father. They argued and fought, but at the end of the day they lived together as part of a larger whole.

Frontier of Faith
Islam in the Indo-Afghan Borderland.
By Sana Haroon.
Columbia. 254 pp. $34.50.

"We didn't even maintain the house we got," the man said.

The rooms long thought to be Pakistan's messiest are the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), which hug 500 miles of the country's mountainous and dangerous border with Afghanistan. Six years ago, the mullahs of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), an alliance of six Islamist parties, were elected in the NWFP during the wave of anti-Americanism that swelled up after the US invasion of Afghanistan. Yet in the recent elections there, the MMA was defeated by the Awami National Party (ANP), a secular Pashtun nationalist party established in 1986 after the merger of a few left-leaning parties. The ANP is led by Asfandyar Wali Khan, the grandson of Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the foremost twentieth-century leader of the Pashtuns, who was known as Frontier Gandhi and had opposed the partition of British India. The MMA's re-election bid faltered because the party had failed to provide even

Basharat Peer's memoir of the Kashmir conflict, Curfewed Night, *will be published by Scribner in the United States next year. He is an assistant editor at* Foreign Affairs.

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the most rudimentary government services to the impoverished people of the frontier region, an area scarred by the brutal insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare being waged by the Taliban and other Islamist militants who control the area and Pakistani soldiers supported by US forces. The MMA's defeat has been celebrated as one of Pakistan's most dramatic and positive developments.

The "war on terror" has made the borderlands a newsworthy topic, yet accounts of the daily struggles, aspirations and challenges of the region's population are rare. American coverage of the recent elections there spotlighted the ANP's victory as a rejection of Islamist parties and marginalized the issues that dominated the campaign: reducing the presence of the Pakistani military, lowering civilian casualties in the counterinsurgency operations and pushing a development agenda in the tribal belt. What's not in short supply are stories about the mullahs and warring tribes; their prominence is a testament to how the frontier region remains an unruly captive of the narrative that first defined it for the world beyond the Hindu Kush and the Khyber Pass: the imperial "Great Game" played by Britain and Russia in the region in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Great Game had its second inning in the early 1980s, when the United States, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan supported the Afghan resistance against Soviet forces in neighboring Afghanistan.

The history of Pakistan's border regions remains an unruly captive of the imperial 'Great Game.'

One of the first printed works to establish the reputation of the North-West Frontier tribes as bloodthirsty and acrimonious was written in 1897 by a second lieutenant of a British cavalry regiment. The young officer was Winston Churchill, who had ended up commanding a brigade tasked with subduing tribes in Malakand—in the frontier territory's northern reaches—after refining his polo game during a posting with his regiment in British India. In *The Story of the Malakand Field Force*, which is peppered with racist and Islamophobic remarks, Churchill says of the frontier tribes, "Except at the times of sowing and of harvest, a continual state of feud and strife prevails throughout the land.… Every man's hand is against the other, and all against the stranger.… To the ferocity of the Zulu are added the craft of the Redskin and the marksmanship of the Boer." He goes on to write that the frontier people were exposed to the "rapacity and tyranny of a numerous priesthood…and a host of wandering Talib-ul-ilms, who correspond with the theological students in Turkey, and live free at the expense of the people. More than this, they enjoy a sort of 'droit du seigneur,' and no man's wife or daughter is safe from them."

In Sana Haroon's *Frontier of Faith*, the history of the borderlands is not a chapter in the story of the Great Game. Haroon, a young Pakistani historian trained at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies, provides a complex and valuable account of the role and influence of the mullahs in the frontier region and the frontier's relationship with external powers from the late nineteenth century to the 1960s. The position and power that the mullahs came to possess in the frontier areas, she explains, was not some sort of a divine right but rather assiduously built from social networking, political and spiritual manipulation, and coercion. The product of meticulous doctoral and postdoctoral research, *Frontier of Faith* draws on a wealth of sources, such as the correspondence and memoirs of British officials, Indian Muslim nationalists and Deobandi scholars; the archived files of the colonial police and administration in Peshawar; Pakistani Urdu and English newspapers of the era as well as rarely explored anticolonial jihadi papers like *Al Mujahid*; and interviews of various descendants of the frontier mullahs in Peshawar. Haroon offers a fascinating street-level view of frontier life and politics, but unfortunately she often gets overwhelmed by details and loses direction. Her book's many insights suffer from the absence of a coherent and elegant narrative.

The rise of the frontier mullahs is not solely religious in origin. While the mullahs' emergence is inextricably linked to the nineteenth-century revival of the ideas of a seventeenth-century north Indian Muslim philosopher, Sheikh Ahmed Sirhindi, and his disciple Shah Wali Ullah, their ascendance was boosted by the transformation of those ideas into weapons of regional warfare and, later, anticolonialism. Sirhindi mixed Sufi practice with a return to the fundamentals—the Koran and the *hadith*, the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. Wali Ullah added the idea of social practice based on Shariah and called for social and political reform. In the early nineteenth century, Wali Ullah's grandson, Shah Ismail, and his friend Sayyid Ahmed Barelvi interpreted this call for social and political reform as a call for jihad and launched campaigns against the Sikhs who ruled most of Punjab and Peshawar. During the campaigns, Barelvi struck a strong alliance with Akhund Ghaffur, a Pashtun Sufi from the tribal belt, and preached Wali Ullah's revivalist vision of Islam among the Pashtuns. (Wali Ullah's faith is akin to Wahhabism, the ultraconservative brand of Sunni Islam whose dramatic spread since the 1970s has been fueled by Saudi petrodollars as well as American cash funneled to the mujahedeen who fought the Soviets in Afghanistan.) Although Barelvi was betrayed by some tribal chiefs and killed during an 1831 battle in a small town in the NWFP called Balakot, about 125 miles from Islamabad, some of his men found refuge in the frontier region with Ghaffur.

Among the descendants of Sirhindi who had settled in Kabul was the city's head priest, Hafiz Ji, the mentor of Ghaffur and religious policy adviser to the Afghan king. In 1835 Dost Muhammad Khan, the ruler of Afghanistan, went to battle against Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of Punjab. On Hafiz Ji's recommendation, Dost Muhammad had appealed to Ghaffur, among others, for military support. Ghaffur obliged, bringing his supporters and students to Peshawar to join the Afghan army. Dost Muhammad rewarded Ghaffur for his support with vast tracts of land throughout the frontier areas. Ghaffur's newfound wealth led him to establish a *langarkhana* (free community kitchen), where 500 people were fed every day; his reputation grew, and the town he lived in turned into a "thriving city whose economy revolved around the *langarkhana*." His disciples spread out and set up bases throughout the frontier promoting Wali Ullah's revivalist vision of Islam.

The Afghan patronage ended in 1878. Ghaffur died, and his disciple Hadda Mulla Najmuddin succeeded him. At the same time, a new ruler in Kabul, Amir Abdur Rahman—after establishing a centralized bureaucracy and a state army—ignored the mullahs and spearheaded intrusions into the tribal regions. The British were also pushing forward from Peshawar to establish control of the frontier region. As he strived to further consolidate his authority and extend the network of his order throughout the entire frontier area, Hadda Mulla resisted the unfavorable Afghan ruler and obsessively fought the British, most fa-

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mously in the Battle of Malakand, which Churchill chronicled. Haroon quotes a letter Hadda Mulla wrote to persuade tribal elders to join a campaign against the British: "The *kafirs* have taken possession of all Muslim countries, and owing to the lack of spirit on the part of the people are conquering every region." These words have been reverberating in those mountains ever since.

Hadda Mulla's words didn't repel the British, but his revivalist religious order continued to dominate the frontier, and opposition to the British continued after his death in 1903, thanks to the work of his disciples. They were led by Haji Turangzai, a mullah who had ventured into the larger world—first to the revivalist Islamic seminary of Deoband near Delhi and then to Mecca for hajj. Turangzai and other disciples of Hadda Mulla named their revivalist agenda *amr-bil maruf wa nahi anal munkir* (the movement for "the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice"), which Haroon describes as "a social mission that was to give the line [their order] its greatest cohesion and form its primary agenda in the twentieth century." Turangzai consolidated the mission's influence by establishing 150 madrassas throughout the British-administered North-West Frontier Province, and then settling full-time in the tribal region of the frontier.

In 1893, after the Second Anglo-Afghan War, the British forced Afghanistan to consent to the drawing of the Durand Line, which demarcated a rough boundary between Afghanistan and British India and was meant to formally limit Afghan influence in the North-West Tribal Areas. But the frontier remained porous, and the tribal mullahs continued to rally their militias in support of various men fighting for the throne of Kabul. The mullahs, who were mostly Pashtuns, enmeshed themselves in the fabric of village life in the frontier region, "trading, interacting and inter-marrying within the clan unit," Haroon writes. The mullahs claimed their place in the villages by managing the local mosques, which Haroon aptly describes as "a functional, inclusive and vibrant arena of male village life." Despite their poverty, illiteracy and sparse communication with the greater world, the villagers in the frontier area were hungry for news—"about on-going wars, the nationalist movement in India, colonial governance, and intrigue at the Afghan darbar, and events across the Tribal Areas." Rumors such as Turks coming to liberate India, and Germany embracing Islam filled the frontier villages. The

— Sharing for Peace —

When a man* shares he grows. Little attention has been given until now to this simple truth. For many, sharing comes naturally, as a matter of course. For others, however, the concept is alien and fraught with suspicion and pain. To these, what is theirs is theirs, almost by divine right, while to share is foreign and absurd. How then can the world move in the direction of sharing and redistribution, prerequisites for world peace?

Wherever men look today they see the results of their inability to share. Across the planet, millions starve and die. Countless others survive in misery and hopeless poverty, condemned to suffer from birth to early grave.

Change will come when men comprehend the reasons for their presence on Earth; when they realize that they are part of a vast evolutionary experiment whose purpose is hidden, to all but a few. When they recognize themselves as souls, parts of the One Oversoul, and grasp the identity of each with the other; when men understand that sharing is the natural order, that selfishness and greed are deviants from the norm, when to share is seen as an opportunity to grow, then will men embrace sharing as an end to their sorrows and their separation.

That time is now upon us. The pressures of inner forces and outer events are making themselves felt on a worldwide scale and are causing a reassessment of man's position and prospects. No longer is it certain that the planet can sustain life indefinitely, subject to its ruthless exploitation by man. Nuclear annihilation is an everpresent threat, while economic competition and financial disarray pose problems which afflict the daily lives of countless millions.

Not for nothing is it now a commonplace for nations to meet to discuss these problems. Such meetings are a sign that man is becoming aware of his responsibilities as steward of the planet, and is ready to take decisions to improve his situation. Foremost among these decisions must be the readiness to share. When the world's goods are shared more equitably, half of man's problems will vanish overnight. Already, there are indications that many realize this, and the call for sharing is rising on every hand. The wise foresee the need for sharing as the only basis of lasting peace, and the heroes of the young lend, too, their popular voice.

This augurs well for the future, for it shows that mankind at last is aware of the choice before it — to share or die — and is ready to act in the spirit of brotherhood and love. No longer are men content to leave their destiny in the hands of others — to governments formed of blind and ageing men — but see the need for direct participation to safeguard their future and their world.

Many still are fearful, but the light of the New Time grows brighter by the hour. Many await the dawn of a New Age with hope and anticipation, aware of the opportunity to serve and grow. They know that they stand not alone but surrounded by others who share their vision and likewise long for brotherhood and peace.

Through sharing alone will that vision be realized. Through sharing alone will that peace be won. That is the message for the present time: share and grow into the reflection of divinity. Share and inaugurate the era of peace and love.

This article, published in *Share International* magazine, was written by a Master of Wisdom. The Masters, headed by Maitreya, the World Teacher, are highly advanced teachers and advisors of humanity who are planning to work openly in the world very soon.

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mullahs received travelers and the occasional newspaper someone brought to the mosque, and used the "traditional Friday sermon to comment on the content of news and its implications."

Around the time of World War I, political activism among Indian Muslims grew more common, invigorated by anticolonialism and questions about colonial repression shared by Muslim communities across the world. "Using the Urdu press to publicise their ideas," Haroon writes, Indian Muslims criticized the British government of India fighting the Ottoman caliph. In this atmosphere, Maulana Mahmudul Hasan, the chancellor of the revivalist Islamic seminary at Deoband, conceived of a plan to launch armed rebellion against the British from the Tribal Areas. Some Deobandi sought assistance and financial support from Afghanistan, and others made plans in 1916 to invite the Ottoman vizier to attack and liberate India. The Deobandi initiative in the frontier died when letters from frontier-based Deobandis to the vizier and Hasan, "written on pieces of silk to avoid detection," were intercepted by the colonial police and most of the senior Deobandi leaders were arrested.

The tribal mullahs turned toward Kabul and fought against the British in 1919 during the Third Anglo-Afghan War, which led to an end of the British control of Afghan foreign policy. Beginning in the 1920s, the British made strong efforts to expand roads, railways and garrisons, especially in Waziristan. Led by the mullahs, the tribes resisted. But when the British responded heavy-handedly, using RAF planes to bomb Muslim militias, the mullahs showed that maintenance of their regional authority was closer to their hearts than anticolonialism. The main mullah order led by Turangzai "did not see the utility in opposing the [colonial] scheme once its monetary benefit accrued to them." (British allowances to the frontier tribes for projects like roads and railways had more than doubled between 1919 and 1925.) And during moments of relative peace between the British and the tribes, Haroon shows, Turangzai, backed by a private militia of mullahs and tribesmen, positioned himself and other mullahs as the chief arbitrators of disputes and order in the frontier—for example, by preventing the extradition of a Pashtun man who had kidnapped a young British girl, and negotiating the release of the girl and the safety of the kidnapper.

Even by the late 1930s, the British had not succeeded in destroying the mullahs' authority, although the RAF's "disproportionate response" to unrest, and the deaths of prominent mullahs like Turangzai, had reduced militant campaigns against the colonial government. But throughout the '30s, opposition to the British rule had grown stronger throughout India. Haroon traces a web of relationships among the tribal mullahs, the Deobandi ideologues and militants, the Khudai Khidmatgars (the nonviolent anticolonial followers of the Gandhian Pashtun leader Ghaffar Khan), Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Muslim League and Mahatma Gandhi's Indian National Congress Party. These relationships also involve a contest for allegiances, which the Muslim League won after Jinnah (who would become the first governor-general of Pakistan in 1947) traveled through the NWFP in 1936, criticizing the British frontier policies and valorizing the independence of the tribal region.

Ghaffar Khan led a Pashtun army that took up nonviolent agitation for Indian independence.

In the summer of 1947, when the British were leaving and the partition plan had been announced, the Tribal Areas joined Pakistan but retained their autonomy and traditional systems of power and authority, even though Ghaffar Khan and his supporters in the NWFP remained committed to an undivided India and, later, a separate state of Pashtunistan. In fact, the Tribal Areas' relationship with the postcolonial Pakistani state was not very different from the region's relationship with the Afghan rulers or with the British. It was a patron-client affair wherein the state provided the tribes with financial and other kinds of assistance to earn their cooperation. The tribal belt was never integrated into the Pakistani polity, and Pakistan made no real effort at establishing modern systems of administration and infrastructure in the region.

Yet from the very beginning the tribes served the purposes of the state, first and foremost in the first Indo-Pakistan war over Kashmir in 1947–48, when Pashtun mullahs led by Turangzai's son, Badshah Gul II, and supported by the Pakistani military led a tribal attack to liberate Kashmir. The invasion, Haroon explains, was not fueled so much by Pakistani "nationalism" as by "opportunity, bravado, and possibly hunger, shored up by massive moral and material support." The first India-Pakistan war over Kashmir helped the Pakistani government "to convene *jirgas* with almost all tribes and ratify new treaty-based settlements between them and the Pakistan government on the colonial model." It took Islamabad many more years to establish control as some Pashtun tribal leaders in Waziristan began an insurgency for a Pashtun state.

Khan, a towering, muscular man with a beaklike nose and much personal wealth, got involved in the Indian freedom struggle in 1919 after the British passed the infamous Rowlatt Act, which denied the right of trial to dissidents. Under Gandhi's influence, Khan turned to an austere life—most photographs show him as a smiling giant dressed in homespun cotton. Khan founded the Servants of God, or the Red Shirt Movement, in 1929, and his roughly 100,000 followers (all turned out in red shirts) were mostly Pashtun peasants. They formed a unique, nonviolent Pashtun army pledged to follow the teachings of Islam and to pursue social and political reform among the Pashtuns and nonviolent agitation for Indian independence. Khan and his Red Shirts supported the Congress Party's cause of an undivided India over the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan. Khan's biographer (and Gandhi's grandson), Rajmohan Gandhi, writes, "The naturalness of his Islam, his directness, his rejection of violence and revenge, and his readiness to cooperate with non-Muslims add up to a valuable legacy for our angry times."

After 1947, as the NWFP became part of Pakistan, Khan's demands for an autonomous Pashtunistan earned the wrath of the Pakistani government. He was jailed for many years and spent most of the 1960s exiled in Afghanistan, where the government of Mohammed Zahir Shah (the king in exile rediscovered by the world in Rome after the fall of the Taliban in late 2001) supported the Pashtunistan demand, opposed Pakistan's membership in the United Nations and provided financial and moral support to secure the loyalty of the frontier mullahs. The volatile frontier was stabilized in the 1950s by American pressure on Afghanistan and Pakistani military action against dissenting tribal leaders like Mirza Ali Khan, who led an armed group of tribesmen from the Mahsud tribe (which counts among its brethren Baitullah Mahsud, the militant leader accused of assassinating Benazir Bhutto). Pakistani military and elected governments believed in the "intractability of the tribes" and avoided the

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expense of infrastructure development, controlling the frontier through financial assistance to tribal leaders. Haroon argues that the tribes would have embraced the social, civic and institutional amenities available to citizens elsewhere in Pakistan, since hundreds of young Pashtuns "were migrating from the Tribal Areas to Peshawar and Kabul in pursuit of education, business opportunities or jobs."

Pakistan mostly ignored the Tribal Areas until the beginning of the US-backed resistance to the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the early 1980s, when the NWFP and FATA became staging areas for Afghan fighters. The story of the Afghan war, the role of Pakistani and American intelligence agencies and Islamist groups, and the rise of the Taliban are stories better read in Steve Coll's fascinating *Ghost Wars* or Ahmed Rashid's *Taliban*. Senior Pakistani journalist Zahid Hussein's *Frontline Pakistan* is another valuable addition to the literature on a post-9/11 Pakistan dominated by terrorist and counterterrorist operations in the NWFP and FATA. Al Qaeda, Afghan, Uzbek and Arab militants and the Taliban have enmeshed themselves in the region, especially Waziristan, marrying local women, living like locals, alternating between working in the fields and firing rockets on US coalition forces in Afghanistan and the Pakistani military.

Haroon's account of the region is marred by her failure to acknowledge the stature of Ghaffar Khan, his movement among the Pashtuns and the nature of his influence in the tribal region. Haroon's discussion of Khan is slight, an odd way to treat a man whose death in 1988 at 98 prompted the Pashtun guerrillas fighting the Soviet forces in Afghanistan to declare a cease-fire for a day in his honor. The Soviets permitted thousands of guerrillas to cross the border into Pakistan for his funeral. Still, this oversight doesn't hamper Haroon's understanding of the origins of the political tragedy of the frontier areas, where about 4 million people have no recourse to Pakistani laws or courts; the literacy rate is only 17 percent, against the Pakistani national average of 45 percent; and female literacy is 3 percent, against the national average of 32 percent. As Haroon observed recently in a column in the *Guardian*, "As long as the Pakistan state continues to represent the tribal areas as a nightmare landscape of roads cut deep through unknowable mountains swarming with enemies—and keeps persisting in trying to control or subjugate them instead of governing—extremists will continue to find them a haven." ■

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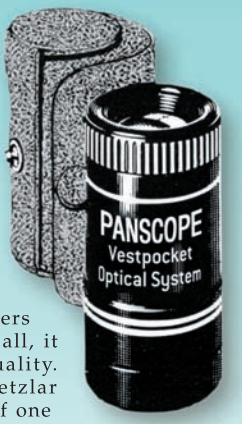

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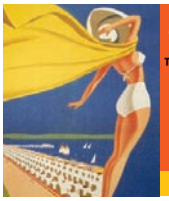

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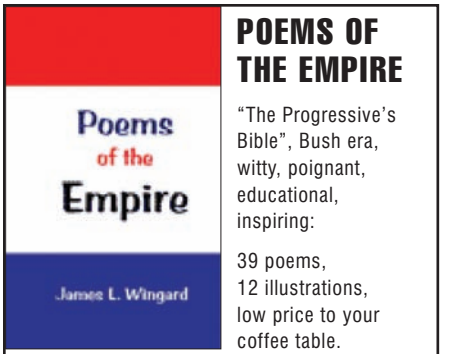

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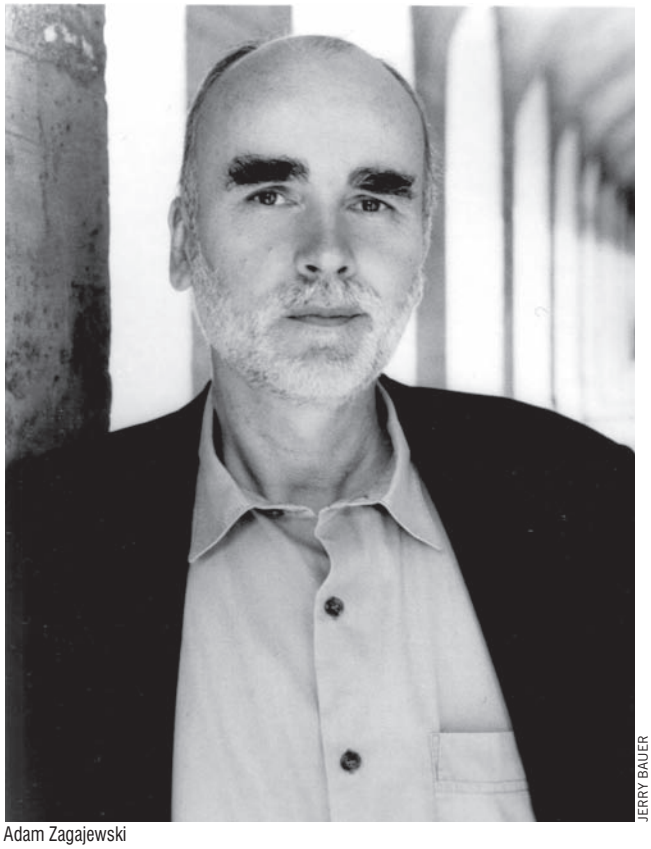
Personal Histories

by BENJAMIN PALOFF

Eternal Enemies
By Adam Zagajewski.
Translated by Clare Cavanagh.
Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 116 pp. $24.

In Praise of the Unfinished
Selected Poems.
By Julia Hartwig.
Translated by John and Bogdana Carpenter.
Knopf. 147 pp. $25.

Anyone doubting the prominent place that Polish poetry now occupies in the American literary landscape need only examine the books published these past few springs, the time of year when publishers large and small try to indulge readers' senses before the lighter summer fare insults their intelligence. Among the heftier recent offerings, there was a new *Selected Poems* by Nobel laureate Czeslaw Milosz and, last year, *The Collected Poems* of Zbigniew Herbert, two poets who have found avid readers in the United States since the 1960s and who have also been instrumental in teaching Americans how to read poetry from the other Europe.



JERRY BAUER

Adam Zagajewski

In the past, that reading strategy has often meant scanning the poem for reassurances and confirmations of our most convenient verdicts on historical catastrophe. Indeed, it has been all too easy for readers otherwise unfamiliar with Poland's postwar poetic traditions to reduce its rich engagement with nature, philosophy and personal experience to a "poetry of witness" or verse "initiated by the apocalyptic fires of history," as Edward Hirsch has described the work of Milosz and Herbert, among others. This year, indispensable collections from two Polish poets, Adam Zagajewski and Julia Hartwig, ask us to unlearn what we have been taught.

Eternal Enemies is Zagajewski's fifth book of poetry in English. It is also his most cohesive and moving to date, in no small part because it transcends the categories most frequently imposed on Polish poets by Anglophone readers. The forceful engagement with historical questions that initially attracted British and American readers to Polish poetry is present here, certainly, but the work is also irreducible to vaguely familiar events or the beatitudes about suffering and tragedy often cherished by those who have not lived through them. Rather, Zagajewski is a refreshingly incurable nostalgist: wherever he is, he cannot extract himself from distant places and people, nor can he ignore a past that is no less palpable for having been conceived in reverie.

This has always been true of Zagajewski's work, and it is difficult to imagine how it could have been otherwise. Soon after he was born, in war-torn Lvov in 1945, his native city was ceded to Soviet Ukraine. Like Herbert, also from Lvov, Zagajewski discovered the unfortunate possibility of living in exile within one's native land. The same longing he expressed in the question "why must every city/become Jerusalem and every man a Jew"—from "To Go to Lvov," a classic early poem—becomes a declaration of the poet's own changes in "Star," which opens the new collection and is quoted here in its entirety:

> I returned to you years later,
> gray and lovely city,
> unchanging city
> buried in the waters of the past.
>
> I'm no longer the student
> of philosophy, poetry, and curiosity,
> I'm not the young poet who wrote
> too many lines
>
> and wandered in the maze
> of narrow streets and illusions.
> The sovereign of clocks and
> shadows
> has touched my brow with his hand,
>
> but still I'm guided by
> a star by brightness
> and only brightness
> can undo or save me.

Most of the poems in *Eternal Enemies* are about wandering "in the maze/of narrow streets and illusions," about how the poet's existential center—his Jerusalem—does not change, no matter how much he is displaced from it. In "Star," Zagajewski most likely has in mind Krakow, where he spent his student years and now makes his home. (Long affiliated with the creative writing program at the University of Houston, he now teaches fall semesters at the University of Chicago.) But the sites and locales to which Zagajewski frequently refers are only ever half real. The other half belongs to a mnemonic ideal, a center of gravity or "brightness" that guides the poet—whether to his salvation or over a cliff, it does not matter. The journey is "without end," as the title of Zagajewski's 2002 volume of new and selected poems puts it.

The double life of place—as concrete geography and personal myth—plays out beautifully in *Eternal Enemies*, which is largely about the dynamic interplay of attraction and separation, as the poet suggests in "Epithalamium":

> Only in marriage do love and time,
> eternal enemies, join forces.
> Only love and time, when
> reconciled,
> permit us to see other beings
> in their enigmatic, complex essence,
> unfolding slowly and certainly, like a
> new settlement
> in a valley or among green hills.

Benjamin Paloff is a poetry editor for Boston Review. *He teaches Slavic and comparative literature at the University of Michigan.*

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Even in this understated wedding poem, Zagajewski cannot forgo the representation of a person's "enigmatic, complex essence" as a place: an area seen from a distance and perhaps navigable, but only in the way one might plot a course while standing over a map. At street level, life becomes much more confusing. "Love and time" rarely "join forces," but in these poems they may be coaxed into tenuous alliance, enabling the poet to play archaeologist in his own life, whether he is wandering the streets of an ancient city in "Notes From a Trip to Famous Excavations" ("You notice campaign slogans on the walls/and know that the elections ended long ago") or, in "Genealogy," looking at photographs of people long dead:

> I'll never know them,
> those outmoded figures
> —the same as we are,
> yet completely different.
> My imagination works to unlock
> the mystery of their being,
> it can't wait for the release
> of memory's secret archives.

A reader predisposed to detect a political subtext in the opening of those "secret archives" would not be disappointed by these poems. Zagajewski, who came of age in the late 1960s, belongs to the so-called New Wave of Polish writers who emerged from politically troubled times behind the Iron Curtain, and he continues to refer to the darker side of Poland's past, sometimes in an oblique verbal echo, sometimes more explicitly. Here are several lines from "The Swallows of Auschwitz": "In the barracks' quiet,/in the silence of a summer Sunday,/ the swallows' shrill cry." What may seem a muted evocation of horror to the American reader, however, is also a direct, literal description of a place, one that would be familiar to the majority of Zagajewski's Polish readers. This is Zagajewski's special talent, a sensibility born of his constant longing to be somewhere, sometime or something other than where, when and what he is. The more attentively he observes the world, the more alien it appears to poet and reader alike.

Consider the poems in the book's first section, simultaneously wondrous and mundane, centered on the poet's experience of Krakow after years in Paris, Houston and Chicago. "The small crowd by the American consulate/ripples like a jellyfish in water," Zagajewski writes in "Stolarska Street." "A young Dominican strides down the sidewalk/and passersby yield piously./I'm at home again, silent as a Buddhist." On Stolarska Street, in the oldest part of Krakow, a local resident might pass the people waiting in front of the consulate and the friars walking in and out of the church several times each day without notice, but it becomes a strangely bewildering sight when imagination must stand in for experience, as it must for many readers. Even the poet seems elsewhere, picturing this scene alongside other places and times: "I remember Greece's small olives,/Westphalia's gleaming railroads,/and the long trip to bid my mother goodbye/on an airplane where they showed a comedy,/everyone laughed loudly."

Zagajewski attaches himself to a vision of the everyday, but this vision remains vulnerable to invasion by fantasy. Frighteningly erudite and occasionally contentious in his prose, he is too well traveled not to be exotic to both American and Polish readers. As he writes in "Ordinary Life," dedicated to Clare Cavanagh, his longtime translator, "Ordinary life desires." Her facility in conveying this everyday longing for the strange or imaginative is in part why Cavanagh is by far Zagajewski's best translator, though his early work also enjoyed the attentions of other exceptional proxies, including C.K. Williams, Benjamin Ivry and Renata Gorczynska. On the one hand, Cavanagh, who has also translated poems by Wislawa Szymborska, has an acutely trained ear for the nuances of Zagajewski's Polish; she knows how to orchestrate his careful tonal shifts between assertion and reflection, moves that might otherwise sound flatly ruminative. On the other hand, she is intimately familiar with the people and places in Krakow and elsewhere that spring the poet into his mental excavations. What he knows, she seems to know as well. What appears mysterious to him is then conveyed as mystery to us.

More than anything else, this willingness to transcend the ordinary by passing through it, to reach beyond the immediate circumstances of the poem's composition, confirms the value of Zagajewski for American readers and the inadequacy of the interpretations sometimes foisted upon him. In the 1980s, when he was living in Paris and slowly coming to the attention of writers in the West, it made some sense to trace the roots of his poems and essays to the experience of Soviet totalitarianism. But even then he was calling for something more, an attention to the rumblings of the earth that does not lose sight of how life is lived on the ground, in minutes and days rather than epochs. Zagajewski suggests this principle beautifully in the preface to *Solidarity, Solitude*, the first of four prose collections to appear in English: "The riddle itself is not distinctly Polish or Eastern-European but universal, because we all have rather complicated identities and we all live in a strangely multidimensional world." And in the poem "Reading Milosz," which shares its title and its intellectual rigor with Robert Hass's seminal 1984 essay, the desire to be transported by lyrical precision is tempered by the actual, unremarkable experience of reading:

> Sometimes your tone
> transforms us for a moment,
> we believe—truly—
> that every day is sacred,
>
> that poetry—how to put it?—
> makes life rounder,
> fuller, prouder, unashamed
> of perfect formulation.
>
> But evening arrives,
> I lay my book aside,
> and the city's ordinary din resumes—
> somebody coughs, someone cries
> and curses.

As in his earlier books, many of Zagajewski's poems reflect on artists and writers who have inspired him. In *Eternal Enemies*, however, that inspiration is most readily born in moments of weakness or failure, the necessary return to earth after a flight of fancy. In "Subject: Brodsky," another poem dedicated to a Nobel Prize–winning poet who made a home in Western literature, Zagajewski sardonically notes that the late Russian poet had his own political party, "Poetry versus the Infinite,/or PVI, if you prefer abbreviations," but that this imposing intellect was at his best when he exposed "the almost timid smile,/the momentary doubt, the hesitation,/the tiny pause in flawless arguments."

This fondness for flaw is equally evident in Julia Hartwig's long-belated debut collection in English, appropriately titled *In Praise of the Unfinished*. Hartwig was born in 1921 and is more than a generation older than Zagajewski, but she also spent several years teaching poetry in the United States in the 1970s. With her late husband, Artur Miedzyrzecki—himself an underappreciated poet and essayist—she has been a tireless and prolific translator of French and American poetry into Polish. (She is especially acclaimed for her work on Guillaume Apollinaire and, more recently, Sylvia Plath, as well as for an influential anthology of American poetry published in the early 1990s.) Heretofore available only in occasional anthologies, sometimes in uneven renderings, her poems are

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no less conversant with the American poetic tradition than are Zagajewski's. In "Translating American Poets," Hartwig explains that it is the American concentration on personal experience—our ubiquitous self-obsessions—that she finds so refreshing:

> This is the dowry you bring
> in poems not aiming at greatness
> but showing the calendar of
> ordinariness
> seen through the eyes of a farmer
> a neurotic and hypochondriac
> a dipsomaniac a nymphomaniac
> a tramp
> brimming with life trampled by
> a gang of misfortunes and failures
> proud of democracy and cursing its
> abuses
> It is wonderful to be able to look at
> one's own country
> like at a man whose virtues and vices
> can be discussed without fear

The political implications of the closing two lines are unmistakable, but they are not pitched as criticism. Sure, American poets are "neurotic," and our "gang of misfortunes and failures" may seem trivial when compared with the tragedies that poets of Hartwig's generation endured under Nazism and communism. If anything, however, Hartwig admires in her American counterparts the opportunity to pick apart "virtues and vices" of man and country alike, to engage in the verbal dissection of subjectivity that is poetry's province. Such a pronouncement has a definite historical and political context, but to read it myopically as testimony about the past is to miss the point: there is nothing in these lines that does not apply just as well to today's world, or tomorrow's.

While Hartwig does not shy away from reflections on historical trauma or engagement with other great voices from the past century—like *Eternal Enemies*, this book includes one poem on Czeslaw Milosz, another on Joseph Brodsky—her most impressive poems revel in doubts about their observations and conclusions. In "Rebuke," memory itself is chastised for its eagerness in seeking embellishment:

> Lawless memory you project
> whatever you like on a screen
> ignoring our expectations
> Cunning one
> you make false pacts with dreams
> thoughtlessly confusing faces and
> gestures
> turning those close to us into
> strangers
> giving strangers unearned familiarity

Similarly, in "A Confession," a piece that calls to mind Milosz's poem of the same title, Hartwig wonders aloud, "What is the value of a being whose testimony is so frail and uncertain?" She receives a provocative reassurance: "For only you, among the different species, know the dignity of your weakness." And finally, in the impressive poem "Tombstone," quoted here in full, what is missing from the image is also what lends it weight:

> They are saying good-bye.
> Two women stretch out their hands.
> A girl takes leave of her mother.
> Next to them the father, lost in
> thought.
> Here lies Aristilla, daughter of a rich
> merchant, loved by her parents.
> She died in Piraeus, 240 years
> before the birth of Christ.
> On a neighboring stele another
> young woman extends her hand
> for an apple that a beloved young
> man is picking from a tree.
> Nearby, a child clasping a dove.
> Hermes is standing at the edge of the
> broken slab. He looks into
> darkness. Where the art of the
> sculptor doesn't reach.

Most of Hartwig's poems are written either in carefully punctuated prose or in unpunctuated verse, where line breaks and tonal movement determine the pauses. Hartwig shares these strategies with Zbigniew Herbert, and it may be that years of translating Herbert have prepared John and Bogdana Carpenter for the spare elegance of the translations produced here. Whereas Herbert would almost inevitably follow the god's gaze far beyond the edge of the slab, however, Hartwig is intent on the moment when real life takes on the faintest patina of myth, where the broken pieces of a funeral marker suggest possibilities that the poet is happy to leave to the reader's imagination.

Elsewhere, Hartwig has described her approach to poetry as one wedded to the actual but continuously open to the imaginative: "If the attitude toward reality is the nerve center of every aesthetic, whether in literature or in art, visible reality has always been a constant point of reference for me.... The truth about it, the image of it accessible to us, at the same time carries us in the most extraordinary way into an invisible sphere.... The experience of reality thus becomes a kind of transcendent experience." She ironically dubs this attitude "reality mysticism." Much as the experiences and lyric strategies of Hartwig and Zagajewski differ, the term might apply just as cleanly to his poems, where history is almost always personal.

In this way, the poems of Hartwig and Zagajewski demand to be read with a much broader purview than historical contextualization can provide. The American and British reception of Central European poetry has long been restricted by the notion of a "poetry of witness," an interpretive model that frames the poem as testimony and moral judgment about historical injustices. Popularized in Britain by Al Alvarez, who ushered such poets as Zbigniew Herbert and Miroslav Holub into English in the 1960s, the concept took root here with the publication of Carolyn Forché's popular anthology *Against Forgetting* (1993), itself a masterpiece of

CZESLAW CZAPLINSKI

Julia Hartwig

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revisionist history and interpretive myopia. "Poetry of witness" has since become a reductive, totalizing rubric, one that not only cordons off those aspects of a poem that do not function as testimony but that also equates history unambiguously with catastrophic political events. When we consider poets from unfamiliar traditions, such simplifications become overwhelming and, more often than not, lead to blurbery, such as when a reviewer for the *San Francisco Chronicle* declares Hartwig's poems "a shining example of gifted witnessing" and insists on a Holocaust reference in a poem where there is none. What really suits Zagajewski and Hartwig to the American context, however, is how they are most comfortable witnessing themselves. What makes them unusual is that they write about the ultimate incomprehensibility of experience with a directness that has become *démodé* in the United States, and with a sobriety that is unattainable when historical catastrophe is merely fetishized as part of an emotional exercise.

At the same time, Hartwig hardly shies away from events of wider historical significance. Her poem "Classmates" recounts how the poet ran into two Jewish girls from her school "on the border of a freshly created ghetto," both of them looking "as if something shameful happened to them." "Towers," meanwhile, considers the space left by the World Trade Center, how "the eyes do not want to accept a void/and draw the familiar contours in the air." But like Zagajewski, Hartwig generally touches these moments lightly, exposing the point where, as in the act of visualizing buildings missing from a skyline that "still dazzles," imagination and reality meet. As Charles Simic and Mark Strand astutely observe in their introduction to *Another Republic: 17 European and South American Writers* (1976), the sadly out-of-print anthology in which many American readers encountered Milosz and Herbert, among others, for the first time, "in history nothing changes except the names." If Zagajewski and Hartwig are to occupy a permanent place in American letters, as they deserve to, it will be because their work transcends these changes, or at least views them at eye level. As Zagajewski concludes in "Life Is Not a Dream," one of the last poems in his book,

> And life went on, inevitable life,
> so skeptical, so practiced,
> coming back to us so insistently
> that one day we felt the taste of
> ordinary failure,
> of common tragedy upon our lips,
> which was a kind of triumph. ■

City of Fear

by JON WIENER

From 1920 to 1960, Los Angeles was the whitest and most Protestant city in the United States, and the American city with the smallest proportion of immigrants—just 8 percent in 1960. By the end of the twentieth century, it was a multiracial place: 3.7 million residents, with 30 percent white, 10 percent black, 10 percent Asian and almost half Latino. During "the white years" in LA history, you might think Asian immigrant groups and black migrants from the South lived in separate worlds. The truth is more complicated: sometimes they were pitted against each other, sometimes they fought—and sometimes they joined forces in left-wing campaigns for jobs, housing and political power. Those competitions and alliances are the subject of Scott Kurashige's fascinating and important new book, *The Shifting Grounds of Race*. Kurashige's originality lies mostly in his research on Japanese-Americans and in his use of black history as an illuminating counterpoint to their struggles.

A professor of history at the University of Michigan, Kurashige begins his story in the 1920s, when Japanese immigrants were legally defined as "aliens ineligible for citizenship," although, alone among Asian immigrant groups, Japanese men were permitted to bring wives—and thus raise a generation of American-born children, the Nisei, or "second generation." Because whites wanted to keep racial minorities out of their neighborhoods, the small number of Japanese in LA sometimes lived in the same neighborhoods as blacks. For those with some money, the West Jefferson neighborhood, near USC, was the place to be. Chester Himes described it in his 1945 novel *If He Hollers Let Him Go* as "a pleasant neighborhood, clean, quiet, well bred." In a 1929 study of the neighborhood, USC interviewers found that while local whites were hostile to both groups, blacks and Japanese-Americans "generally held favorable views of each other."

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Quiet streets: Little Tokyo in July 1942, after the US government interned thousands of citizens

The Shifting Grounds of Race
Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles.
By Scott Kurashige.
Princeton. 346 pp. $35.

The Communist Party organized among blacks and Japanese-Americans in LA in the 1930s and '40s, and Kurashige emphasizes the CP's "multiracial vision of full equality" for both groups. In the '20s, the party in LA was a small organization of mostly Jewish immigrants from Russia, but during the Popular Front period, beginning in 1936, it grew to nearly 3,000 members. The national CP had a "Japanese section" with 200 members and claimed a thousand more Japanese-American fellow travelers, vocal opponents of the rise of fascism in Japan. (LA at the time had a population of 35,000 Japanese and Japanese-Americans.) Nisei leftists in LA organized the Market Workers Union in 1936, with 500 Japanese-American members. But when the Teamsters took over the union in 1937 in a jurisdictional dispute, they purged the Nisei.

Kurashige has found in the archives a few vivid cases where Japanese-Americans and blacks joined forces: in the mid-1930s Japanese-American Communists in LA produced bilingual fliers declaring "Scotts-

Jon Wiener, a Nation *contributing editor, teaches history at the University of California, Irvine. His most recent book is* Historians in Trouble.

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boro Boys Must Be Freed"; and in 1934 Langston Hughes gave the keynote speech at the party's "Japan Night"—his topic was "The Japanese and the Darker Races." Internationalism was the party line, but for those who saw World War II in the Pacific as a race war, there was a more sinister side to solidarity: in those same years, W.E.B. Du Bois praised Japan's invasion of Manchuria for "showing the way to freedom" from white supremacy, calling the Chinese, as Kurashige puts it, "the Uncle Toms of the Far East." This notion, Kurashige reports, "had spread through portions of Black America." Hughes had a similar position, writing in 1944 about a white person telling a black church audience that "these Japs are really trying to wipe us white folks off the face of the earth"—to which "a dark and wrinkled old grandma in the amen corner" responded, "It's about time!"

Prominent Japanese Communists in the United States faced a terrible choice in the 1930s, when almost a dozen from LA were threatened with deportation. With the help of the party's International Labor Defense, they "voluntarily" accepted exile to the Soviet Union rather than returning to Japan, where they faced execution. But in Stalin's Russia, Kurashige notes, at least five of them were "imprisoned and executed as 'infiltrators.'" As tensions across the Pacific grew, mainstream Japanese-Americans, represented by the Japanese-American Citizens League (JACL), were torn between allegiance to Japan and the United States. As late as 1940, LA's Japanese daily newspaper *Rafu Shimpo* (founded in 1903 by three students at USC) was printing Japanese government propaganda in its English section, describing the Chinese in Manchuria welcoming invading Japanese soldiers as liberators and describing the Japanese puppet state Manchukuo as a "miracle of the 20th century."

Before World War II, Japanese-Americans and blacks were, in Kurashige's words, "roughly equal targets of degradation by whites." But after Pearl Harbor, the former were defined as enemies of the state, while the latter were granted equal employment rights by the White House. However, Kurashige points out that there were hardly any calls for internment in the month immediately following the bombing. In fact, FDR, Attorney General Francis Biddle and many others spoke out against hostility to Japanese-Americans. In LA, the County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution on December 9, two days after the bombing, declaring that Japanese-Americans had "proven their loyalty to the United States by service in the [First] World War and in other ways." And the *Los Angeles Times* ran a photo of Mayor Fletcher Bowron with Nisei leaders on December 8 headlined Japanese Americans Ready to Aid Nation. A liberal Republican supporter of civil liberties, Bowron had dismantled the notorious LAPD Red Squad and spoken out against anti-Communist witch hunts in 1940. Immediately after Pearl Harbor he assured Nisei leaders that the city would provide them with the "protection accorded any other citizen." But by January 1942, with public opinion inflamed over news accounts of Japanese atrocities in the Philippines and with FDR issuing Executive Order 9066 requiring internment, Bowron had turned into a virulent advocate of rounding up all Japanese-Americans. He went so far as to argue that the Nisei posed the greatest threat of sabotage and espionage in what he said would be a "second Pearl Harbor" in LA.

It's well-known that the mainstream JACL called on Japanese-Americans to cooperate with internment on the grounds that, although it was unjust, the community was powerless to stop it, and redress could be pursued after the war's end. It's also well-known that the CP supported the roundup on the grounds that opposing FDR would interfere with winning the war. (The leading Japanese-American CP member, Shuji Fujii, published a telegram he sent to FDR in the Popular Front *Eagle* that called on the government to "exterminate…un-American elements amongst us.") But the most shocking fact in Kurashige's book is that internment was not challenged by Nisei Communists. Despite their enthusiasm, the party suspended its Nisei comrades under the slogan "Everything for National Unity!"

The key research on black organizations' positions on the internment has been done by Cheryl Greenberg, a professor of history at Trinity College, who found that the NAACP, the National Urban League and the National Council of Negro Women were mostly silent about the internment. Kurashige's impressive research deepens the gloom. He searched the archives for LA blacks who criticized the internment as racist and found only one black newspaper, the *Tribune*, that "took a firm stand against" it—but "unfortunately the bulk of its wartime publications are unavailable in existing archives," so we don't really know what they said, or whether they changed their position when the climate became even more inhospitable.

Public opposition in LA to the internment was limited to a few individuals—no-

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tably Clifford Clinton, a white man and the proprietor of the famous Clifton's Cafeteria downtown (which is still open). Even Carey McWilliams, then chief of California's Division of Immigration and Housing (and not yet editor of *The Nation*), reluctantly supported internment in a 1942 article—although he soon became its most outspoken white critic. In black LA, the *Eagle*, published by leftist Charlotta Bass, ignored the internment and publicized the "Negro Victory Market," a grocery co-op aimed at replacing the departed Japanese-American grocers.

Meanwhile, poor blacks from Texas and Louisiana were pouring into the city in search of wartime factory jobs. Whites didn't want black neighbors, and so the newcomers moved to the suddenly vacant Little Tokyo. Overnight Little Tokyo turned into Bronzeville, an overcrowded ghetto known for its wild nightlife, centered on Shepp's Playhouse, where young Charlie Parker and Miles Davis played. What the white elites had viewed as a Japanese slum they now saw as an even worse Negro slum.

Poor blacks drawn by factory work to LA settled in a Little Tokyo desolated by internment.

The internment officially ended on January 2, 1945, but the mayor warned that Japanese-Americans "had better not come back to Los Angeles." In Manzanar, they listened; over the next six months, only 3 percent of LA's prewar Japanese-American population returned to the city. The War Relocation Authority (WRA) had to force the rest to leave Manzanar in the fall of 1945. Eventually two-thirds came back to LA, but they had nowhere to live—leading the WRA to house them (FEMA-style) in trailer parks in Burbank, Santa Monica, Hawthorne, El Segundo and Santa Ana. The city fathers feared rioting in Bronzeville, but it never materialized; in July 1946 *Ebony* magazine ran a story on "The Race War That Flopped." The racial peace seems in part to have been the work of Common Ground, a 1945 project of the Pilgrim House, one of several Protestant church efforts to promote "interracialism." But Bronzeville/Little Tokyo was still targeted for "urban renewal," and in 1949, 2,500 Japanese-Americans and blacks were evicted to make way for a new LAPD headquarters and then a city parking garage.

The Protestant integrationists' goal was to prevent the formation of a new Little Tokyo and instead integrate Japanese-Americans into suburban LA. Nisei leaders worried about undermining their historic community support institutions yet were drawn to the idea of integration; Kurashige notes that "public recognition that the Nisei were even *potentially capable* of assimilation represented a paradigm shift." And so the same Japanese-Americans who were treated as criminals during the war became the "model minority" whose successful integration into mainstream America was contrasted with the failure of blacks to overcome what sociologists called "dysfunction." Liberals like Ronald Reagan embraced them, honoring Japanese-American veterans and declaring in 1945 that "America stands unique in the world, the only country not founded on race, but on…an ideal." Not everyone agreed; the Teamsters' official magazine declared it "senseless to argue" that "Japs are American citizens." The union lobbied for the revocation of citizenship for Japanese-Americans.

In 1952 Congress passed the McCarran Walter Immigration Act over Truman's veto. The act banned "suspected subversives" from entering the United States—those kept out included Gabriel García Márquez, Pablo Neruda and Graham Greene. Yet it contained a political triumph for the Nisei. In a little-known provision, the bill asserted that Japan had become our principal cold war ally in Asia. It granted naturalization rights to Japanese immigrants and permitted many more Japanese to immigrate. The quota itself wasn't as significant as family reunification: in the 1950s, tens of thousands of Japanese legally immigrated, almost all of them family members of US citizens. As a result, more Japanese people arrived in the United States in that decade than in the previous forty years put together.

The new model minority completed its move to the suburbs, notably Gardena, Long Beach and Pasadena. But for blacks, moving just one block into white territory provoked protests and then white flight. The neighborhood around Florence and Normandie, where the Rodney King riots began in 1991, was virtually all-white in 1950; 6,000 blacks moved into the neighborhood during the 1950s, and by the '60s, only a handful of whites remained.

For blacks there was one shining exception to the sea of black segregation in 1960s Los Angeles: the Crenshaw district, west of USC and south of the Santa Monica Freeway. There, Japanese-Americans, blacks and liberal whites lived together—for a time. Crenshaw started out after World War II as "the new Little Tokyo," and by the early 1960s it had Southern California's largest Japanese-American community, centered around the new Crenshaw Square shopping center, with its 1950s "Oriental" architecture and landscaping and a Japanese summer festival. But that changed in 1965, when the anger from the riots in nearby Watts spilled into Crenshaw. Japanese-American stores were looted and burned. Afterward, Crenshaw Neighbors, an organization formed by white and black women in 1961, tried to persuade whites and Japanese-Americans not to flee. (It was perhaps the region's only homeowners' group that fought for integrated neighborhoods.) The city opened a new high school, Crenshaw High, hoping to keep white and Japanese-American families in the area. That effort failed; Crenshaw became a black neighborhood in the 1970s.

Still, Crenshaw's political legacy was huge. Tom Bradley, LA's first black mayor, elected in 1973, got his start in the Crenshaw Democratic Club, where he learned to walk precincts and began his lifelong alliance with Jewish liberals. After taking office, he provided the first real opportunity for Japanese-Americans to participate in city government, and "always maintained a significant Japanese American presence in his office." During the Bradley era, even as much of black LA fell deeper into poverty, many Japanese-Americans prospered. (Kurashige, however, is more interested in another kind of globalization—the young Japanese-American radicals of the campus Third World liberation movements of the early '70s.)

After Watts, one symbol of interracial harmony in Crenshaw remained: Holiday Bowl, the Nisei-run bowling alley that had opened in 1958. In its coffee shop, blacks ate udon and Japanese-Americans ate soul food. Kurashige ends his book with the battle to save Holiday Bowl from the wrecking ball in 2000, when Manzanar survivors teamed up with working-class black veterans of the Negro bowling leagues and Anglo preservation activists. They lost that fight. The place was torn down in 2001, but it's been enshrined in local history by the Japanese-American National Museum of LA. (It also has its own website, holidaybowlcrenshaw.com.) For Kurashige, Holiday Bowl provides a model of an alternative future for "polyethnic" Los Angeles—a future we might call "bowling together." ■

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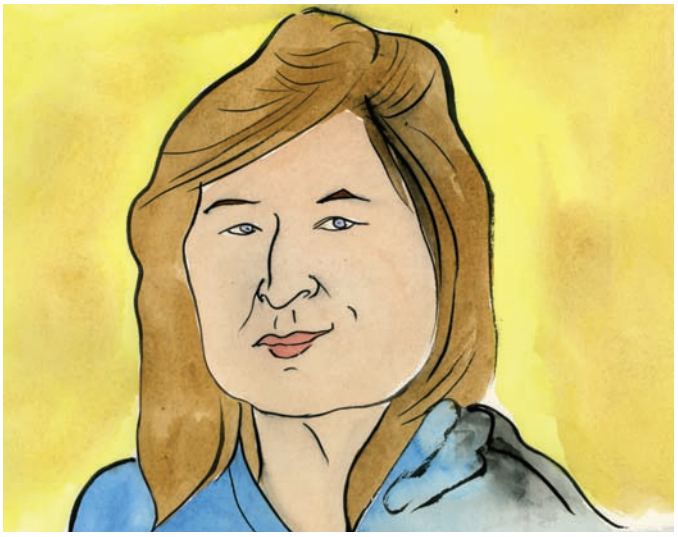

ADRIAN BELLESGUARD

Honor Moore

Since her first collection of poetry, *Memoir* (1988), Honor Moore has drawn on personal experience in her writing. In *The Bishop's Daughter* (Norton), an excerpt of which was published in *The New Yorker*, she reveals that her father, the late Bishop Paul Moore, was gay. —*Christine Smallwood*

What was the research for this book like?

I had letters between my parents, and my father's letters home from the war and some other letters of his. I had their letters to me, my letters to them—a lot of them. I had my father's papers, which are in the archives of the Episcopal Church. I had my father's three books and my mother's memoir. I had tried relentlessly for twenty-five years to write about my father—mainly because he noticed that I wrote about my mother all the time and he would once in a while say, "Uh, *hello*?" He'd say things like, "Are you finished with the Jenny material now?" I knew it was a kind of emotional failure in me that I couldn't get to it.

Do you hope that this book will be a kind of lesson?

One of the reasons I write is I'm saying, Don't you understand? Everything I write is to try and make whoever the reader is *feel* the experience that I'm writing about. One of my sisters said when she read the manuscript, "Thank you for writing it. For me it's not what Pop did or didn't do in his life—it's that I don't have to keep a secret anymore." So yes, I would hope that it would demonstrate what a secret did to one family, and one father-daughter relationship and one mother-daughter relationship. I would hope that it would extend the conversation within the Episcopal Church about inclusion.

I went to this event at Town Hall for Matthew Shepard. Most moving to me was Judy Shepard, his mother. She said, It's unacceptable that everybody shouldn't be accepted and loved for who he or she is. And it made me think of my father, who couldn't really accept and love himself for who he was. And you know that moment in the therapy scene when he's talking about going around the country for his book? People come up to him saying, You've had such an extraordinary life, and he says, If only they knew the truth. It's just not acceptable to me that any person should ever have to feel that way for one second. Of course, I held that value before writing the book. But somehow writing the book has made me absolutely implacable. I have a kind of fury about it.

Three of your siblings published critical letters in *The New Yorker* about the excerpt. Were you surprised by their reactions?

I have, as you know, eight brothers and sisters, and I did expect that there would be a large range of response, since we were born over a period of seventeen years. My sister who's ten years younger said, when she read the book, We really had a different family. We had different parents. I was very careful to tell only my story. I think I have the right to tell only my story. I really intended the dedication when I wrote, "For my siblings, each of whom would have another story." They all knew I was writing it, they all received galleys in December. And so I suppose the response was, yes, I certainly was surprised. And it's not something I would ever do, so.

What was it like to grow up with your father's public persona?

The time that I had the most anger at him about the public/private thing was after the revelation of his true sexuality, when he published his autobiography, *Presences*, which I felt misrepresented my mother because he didn't come out—my mother, who left the marriage essentially because she had discovered this. I thought, You can't say all these things about her being in a mental hospital and so on and not tell the truth about yourself. And so he did adjust somewhat what he said in response to my protest and some others'. But I was always impressed by his consistency. And then when I went through his papers and read his oral history, he was more amazing than I had thought. That was a little interesting, from the feminist-activist point of view.

Can you say more about what role that feminist point of view played in the project?

It was the legacy of consciousness-raising, the legacy of a kind of necessity of telling the truth and of setting things right, that's the short answer. I couldn't be whole in the world. And besides, I didn't think the truth was so bad! I understood that he had suffered terribly. And I myself having been with women couldn't imagine living like that. Then when I wrote the book, I thought, how did he manage to have the kind of generosity that he did? A lot of people who are closeted turn into the most horrific homophobes. So I was kind of amazed.

Sometimes a memoir invites readers to pass judgment.

I find that mysterious. I'm not really very judgmental. A friend who read the book early had a kind of judgmental response to my father. And a friend who's a writer said, So? Did he call up Dostoyevsky and complain about Raskolnikov, for God's sake? I feel a little like that: why can't you be open to the multiplicity of human experience? Why can't you say, Jeez, what a life to have to make your way through? And, well, if you want to say, I would have done it differently, great. But I actually couldn't say that. I couldn't say I'd do it differently. ■

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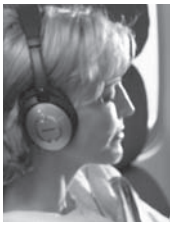

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